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DANCE

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The Duport Mystery

by LILLIAN MOORE

Cover designed by Karl Leabo

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DANCE PERSPECTIVES
A. J. Pischl, Selma Jeanne Cohen, Editors
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The chapter numbers are encircled with contredanse figures engraved by the father of Pierre Landrin Duport. The drawings of ships and stage-coaches are from contemporary newspapers.

On the cover and title page: The Ball of the May at Versailles. By M. A. Slodtz. (Dance Collection, New York Public Library.) Insert on back cover from *Maryland Journal,* April 12, 1791.

Inside back cover and facing page: A manuscript fragment of Pierre Landrin Duport's score for the ballet *The May,* produced in Boston, 1794; and a "Grand Jig—for a Ballet at Boston 1796."

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IN PERSPECTIVE

In recent years America has taken great pride in its achievements in ballet. And most writers point to how young the art is in this country. They seem unaware that ballet was flourishing in the United States when George Washington became president of the new nation. Historians have ignored this early and strikingly illustrious phase of American dance history.

Historians, that is, with the exception of Lillian Moore, who began discovering forgotten American dancers soon after she had put on her first pair of ballet slippers. Just out of high school, and a member of the Metropolitan Opera Ballet, she spent her free hours with dust-covered volumes that told her the exciting story of great artists of another era. Since then, with the skill and determination of a detective, she has travelled throughout this country and Europe, uncovering evidence that should make Americans take even greater pride in their dance heritage.

We are already in her debt for many insights into ballet history. Now, with *The Duport Mystery,* she makes one of her most significant contributions to date. From the yellowed pages of eighteenth-century newspapers and playbills, from family letters and heirlooms, from old public records and churchyards, she has extracted this biography of a family of great artists.

Long lost in oblivion, they step before us again: Pierre Landrin Duport, the pioneer teacher and choreographer, violin in hand, instructing the young Louis Duport; Louis himself, all of eleven years old, dancing a hornpipe to the delight of an adult audience; his beautiful teen-age partner, Suzanne Vaillande; her rope-dancing lover, Alexandre Placide . . . From the pages of the past, Miss Moore brings them forth to show us their loves, their quarrels, their adventures and their achievements.

And the mystery? Let her tell you about it . . .

Pierre Landrin Duport. By an unknown painter. Courtesy of Captain Charles C. Copp (Photograph by Albert O. Allen, Washington, D.C.)

THE DUPORT MYSTERY

Although American ballet has received widespread recognition as a cultural force only during the past quarter of a century, it was a popular form of entertainment in this country before the close of the eighteenth century, and its roots go very deep.

Individual dancers of considerable merit had appeared throughout the Colonies even before American independence was achieved. A little later, the French Revolution indirectly stimulated the development of American music, painting, dance and theatre. Many artists of oustanding talent were forced to flee France because of their intimate associations with the aristocracy, and a great number of them found refuge in the United States.

Among the first the arrive, in 1790, was the teacher, choreographer and composer Pierre Landrin Duport, who claimed to have taught dancing and music to the children of the ill-fated Marie Antoinette. With him came his Irish wife, née Charlotte McNeill; their small daughter Anna, who was to distinguish herself as a dancer before marrying one of America's earliest composers, Alexander Reinagle; and a nine-year-old boy named Louis Duport, who may or may not have been their son.

Pierre Landrin Duport's career in America covered more than thirty-five years, and although he and his little family surely suffered many of the hardships of pioneers, in a country where their art was little known, it must have been richly rewarding to him to see how much it progressed during his lifetime. Duport broke the ground and ploughed the fields in what were then widely separated sections of the country. He taught dancing and produced ballets in Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Baltimore, Georgetown, Norfolk, and many smaller communities before he finally retired to make his home with his daughter's family in Washington. When he died there, in

1841, Fanny Elssler was in the midst of the triumphant tour which marked the climax of the romantic ballet in America.

Exactly fifty years before Elssler's American debut, the young prodigy Louis Duport made his first appearance in a modest performance at Gray's Inn, on the outskirts of Philadelphia. During the next six years, until his mysterious disappearance between engagements in Savannah and Norfolk in 1796, Louis Duport acquired a double reputation as an accomplished virtuoso on the violin and the most brilliant dancer the United States had seen. And although Pierre Landrin Duport was inordinately proud of the lad, whom he advertised not only as his son, but as his outstanding pupil; Louis left home, before he was thirteen, to join a wandering troupe of dancers and actors. Thenceforth he followed an entirely independent and remarkably precocious career. Did his ungrateful behavior (for his parting from his father could hardly have been amicable) cause his name to be struck from the family records? Or was he not the son of P. L. Duport at all, but a relative—perhaps a nephew—who fled to America with him in the confused holocaust of the French Revolution? Whatever the explanation, the fact remains that family records (including an ancient Bible which records the Duport-McNeill marriage, and is still in the possession of living descendants of Pierre Landrin Duport) show no trace of the name of Louis Duport. Furthermore, the gravestone of Pierre Landrin Duport and his wife states that it was erected by "their affectionate and only child Anna. . . ." To complicate matters still further, P. L. Duport's surname was actually not Duport at all, but Landrin.

Who, then, was the mysterious "American" Louis Duport? Unless, by a remote possibility that he was actually the great Louis Antoine Duport (the extraordinary dancer who challenged Auguste Vestris in an epic contest for supremacy at the Paris Opéra), his true identity remains a mystery. His 1796 disappearance seems to have been final. No record of any further performances after the age of fifteen, or of his death, has yet been found.

THE LANDRINS OF PARIS

Pierre Landrin Duport was born in Paris in 1762 or 1763.[1] His father was a versatile and enterprising dancing master who also conducted a thriving business in publishing his own dances and those of his friends. His Christian name has not yet been established, but his surname was Landrin. Pierre Landrin Duport, in an advertisement inserted in the *Columbian Centinel,* Boston, on August 24, 1793, stated that he was the "Son of Mr. Landrin, Dancing-Master in Paris, and first Teacher of Cotillions to the late Royal Family of France. . . ."

The name of Landrin was well known in the musical circles of eighteenth-century Paris. In 1750, a certain Jean Landrin, organist of the King's Chapel, led a formal protest of all the organists of Paris against the Community of Dancing Masters (a guild, or union), claiming that they were encroaching on the musicians' domain by teaching various instruments instead of confining themselves to terpsichorean activities.[2] The dancers undoubtedly considered music as their legitimate province, since during the eighteenth century every dancing master was obliged to be a proficient violinist. At that time, it was customary for a *maître de danse* to provide his own accompaniment, by playing simple tunes on a *pochette,* or pocket-sized violin. (There is a fine collection of these miniature violins, which were often exquisitely made of fine wood inlaid with mother of pearl, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.)

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it had been the privilege of dancing masters to accompany the vocal music in

1. The gravestone of Pierre Landrin Duport, in Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Washington, D.C., states that he died April 11, 1841 "in the 79th year of his age."
2. *Mémoire, lettres patents et arrêts pour les organistes compositeurs de musique . . . contre le roi et maître des Ménestriers, & la Communauté des Maîtres à danser . . .* (Paris, 1751).

the churches of France, and at one time it had even been mandatory for a professional musician to be licensed as a dancing master to be eligible for a church position.[3] In 1747 Pierre Guignon, the last "king of the violins" (his official title was *roy et maître des ménétriers et joueurs d'instrumens tant haut que bas du royaume*), claimed the right, for himself and his lieutenants, to issue licenses to all who wished to teach music and dancing in the city of Paris. Guignon decreed that each applicant must pass an audition before himself and a jury of masters of dancing and music, after which he must pay a fee of 500 livres (but only 65 livres if he was the son or grandson of a *maître*) and would then receive his *brevet de maître*.[4] It was against Guignon's rule, which grouped musicians and dancers indiscriminately together, that Jean Landrin, heading a strong group of organists and clavecinists, led his revolt. After 1750, the power of the "king of the violins" was broken.

In 1756, Jean Landrin was organist of the Church of St. Roch, Paris.[5] About 1784, a Landrin was organist at the Hôtel des Invalides and was one of the four organists of the King.[6] The *Annales* of 1785 mention a Landrin, organist (without giving a Christian name) and in the same year, a "widow of J. Landrin, organist."[7]

This Jean Landrin was probably a relative—perhaps the father or brother—of Pierre Landrin Duport's father, who certainly had a brother, for he is listed in the *Catalogue des Maîtres de Danses, Joueurs d' Instrumens de Musique, tant hauts que bas,* for 1773[8] as "Laudrin [sic] fils, chez M. son frère, rue des Boucheries S. Germain près le petit Marché."[9]

3. Edouard Nogué, *Le Violoncelle, jadis et aujourd'hui* (Paris, n.d.), p. 92.
4. Antoine Vidal, *Les Instruments à Archet* (Paris, 1877-78), II, 21-22.
5. E. Lebeau, bibliothécaire chargé des fonds musicaux, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, in a letter to the author, May 30, 1956.
6. Alexandre E. Choron and François E. Fayolle, *Dictionnaire Historique des musiciens artistes et amateurs, morts ou vivants . . .* (Paris, 1810), I, 399.
7. E. Lebeau, op. cit.
8. Broadside (incomplete) in the collection of the author.
9. Another Landrin (or perhaps the same, for he seems to have been a versatile fellow) wrote satirical pieces for the Théâtre d'Audinot, one of the most popular theatres on the Boulevard du Temple. In 1775, he wrote a piece called *Les Curiosités de la Foire,* in which the most notorious ladies of Paris appeared, thinly disguised, under the names of rare animals. Rosalie Duthé, the celebrated dancer and courtesan, attended the first performance and found her own character so vividly depicted that she fainted. Her protector, the Duc de Dur, soon managed to supress Landrin's little play. (Albéric Deville, *Arnoldiana, ou, Sophie Arnould et ses Contemporains* (Paris, 1813), pp. 256-257.)

The engraved leaflets issued circa 1760-1785 by Landrin, "Md. de Musique et M. tre de Danse" (music dealer and dancing master), are eagerly sought by collectors today. Each booklet, in 4 to 8 pages, contains a complete contredanse or minuet. Each has an engraved title page, with an illustration or decorative symbol, and includes the music, the description in words, the floor pattern and the notation of the dance in simple choreographic symbols, similar to those used by De la Cuisse in his famous series, *La Répertoire des Bals.*

Landrin was a prolific publisher, and although his little leaflets rarely appear on the market today, there are collections of them in a number of libraries.[10] He issued dances arranged by such celebrities as Nivelon,[11] Desnoyer,[12] Lany[13] and Deshayes.[14] The dancing master Lechard was responsible for the music and choreography of *La Paul Jones, contredanse françoise,* published by Landrin shortly after the great naval victories of the famous American. A typical contredanse for four couples, in 6/8 time, it bears little resemblance

10. The Library of Congress has five collections of Minuets, Allemandes, and Anglaises (four of which consist of music only); the British Museum has 68 Contredanses numbered (in a broken sequence) from 1 to 254; the National Library of Ireland, in Dublin, has 37 *Contredanses Françoises,* and the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, has a *Recueil de Contredanses françaises* in 48 parts.
11. The title page of *La Belle, contre-danse française, dansé au Wauxhall,* states that the figures of the dance are by "Nivelon, Danseur de la Comédie Française." Actually, there were two Nivelons appearing at the Comédie Française during the period of Landrin's activity as a publisher. The elder, whose given name is unknown, was a *danseur figurant* there from 1763 to 1767. Louis-Marie Nivelon, who later became *premier sujet* at the Paris Opéra, made his first appearance in the children's ensemble at the Comédie Française in 1769, at the age of nine. He remained there until he was seventeen, when he made a brilliant debut at the Opéra (where Jean Georges Noverre was the choreographer) in *Hylas et Zélie.* Probably the elder and less famous Nivelon arranged *La Belle,* since it seems unlikely that Louis-Marie, precocious as he may have been, would have had dances published before he was seventeen; and after that age he was no longer a *danseur de la Comédie Française.* Unfortunately this dance bears no date of publication.
12. Desnoyer (or Desnoyers) was *premier danseur* of the Comédie Française from 1763 until he retired on a pension in 1784. He composed the music as well as the figures of his dances.
13. Jean-Barthélemy Lany (1718-1786) was a leading dancer at the Paris Opéra, and for many years its *maître de ballet.* He retired in 1781.
14. Jean Baptiste François De Hesse (1705-1779), known also as Deshayes, was one of the great pioneers of dramatic ballet, his experiments and productions in this field considerably antedating those of Noverre. He staged many ballets for the Comédie Italienne, as well as for the King's private theatre at Versailles. See Artur Michel, "Two Great XVIII Century Ballet Masters," *Gazette des Beaux Arts* (May 1945), pp. 271-286.

to the "mixer" of the same name, still danced today. Two Landrin publications, which we have been unable to examine, were named *L'Ameriquene* and *L'Indipendence* [sic]. Probably published when Pierre Landrin Duport was in his 'teens, they may have helped to turn his thoughts towards the new United States.

The titles of the dances arranged by Landrin himself often revealed his close association with the French aristocracy. They included *La Nouvelle Duchesse, Les Tuileries* and *La Nouvelle Dauphine.* (This last may have celebrated the birth of Marie Antoinette's daughter, the Duchess d'Angoulême, in 1778.) He collaborated with Lany, retired ballet master of the Paris Opéra, on a *feuille* which included Lany's *Le Bal Masquer* and Landrin's *L'Anglaise-Française.* The music for most of Landrin's dances was composed by another dancing master, Lahante, although Landrin himself may have written some of the music in the five collections at the Library of Congress. Certainly his son Pierre was a trained musician, for he began composing music at the age of fourteen.

Landrin published pure music as well as dance arrangements. Early in his publishing career, probably before 1769, he issued the *Six Sonates pour le Violoncelle*[15] by the rising young violoncellist Jean-Pierre Duport, later to become one of the most celebrated virtuosos of his time. Landrin was, therefore, at least acquainted with Jean-Pierre Duport. Since (in addition to his brother Jean-Louis, an equally distinguished cellist) Jean-Pierre Duport is said to have had nineteen sisters (of whom three survived childhood), it is possible that Landrin married one of them. In that case, Pierre Landrin may merely have adopted the maiden name of his mother, a name of which he had every reason to be proud.

This theory is strongly supported by the fact that Jean-Pierre and Jean-Louis Duport had a niece named Mlle. Landrin.[16] Probably she was the younger sister of Pierre Landrin Duport. Like little Louis Duport, she was a child prodigy and something of a mystery. In 1785 (when Pierre Landrin Duport was already twenty-two, and had left Paris to teach in Dublin), a nine-year-old girl billed only as "Mlle. Landrin" made her debut as a piano virtuoso at the Concert Spirituel,

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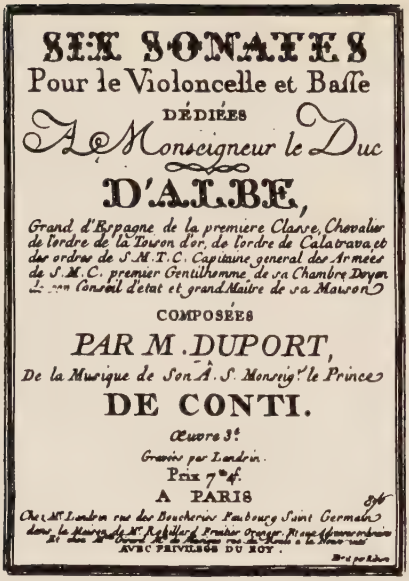
16. Choron and Fayolle, I, 399.

Title page of Jean-Pierre Duport's Sonatas, published by Landrin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AVEC PRIVILÈGE DU ROY.

a long-established concert organization of impeccable artistic standards, which usually played at the Palais des Tuileries.

Little Mlle. Landrin provides additional proof of the extraordinary musical talents of this family. "C'est une véritable prodige et elle a joué avec expression et une grande precision," wrote a contemporary critic, following her debut on March 26, 1785.[17] During the four years when she was a frequent soloist at the Concert Spirituel her uncle, Jean-Louis Duport, then an established artist of international renown, was also playing there regularly, and his compositions for the cello appeared frequently on the programs. He was a person of importance, and may well have smoothed the path of his young relative. Nevertheless her promising career lasted only four seasons. No references to her, after the outbreak of the French Revolution, have been discovered. Perhaps she was one of its earliest casualties. At any rate, Mlle. Landrin furnishes a definite link between the families of Landrin and Duport, and the mysterious brevity of her career offers an interesting parallel to that of the young dancer Louis Duport.

17. Quoted in Edouard G. J. Gregoir, *Bibliothèque Musicale Populaire* (Bruxelles, 1877-79), III, 10-11.

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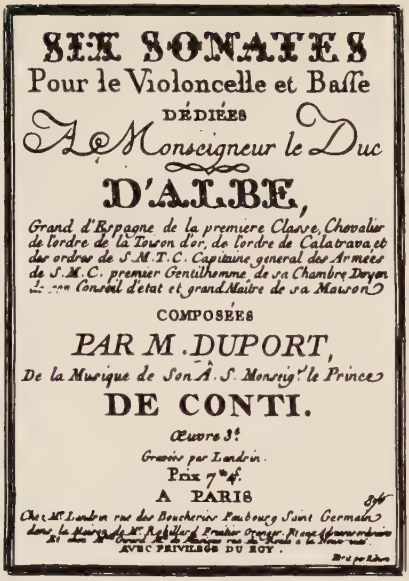
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cellist of his chapel. From 1787 to 1806, he was superintendent of court concerts. Among his many pupils was the Crown Prince, later William II of Prussia.

Jean-Pierre Duport's wife was Johanna Maria Trial, sister of both the violinist and conductor Jean Claude Trial, and the *opéra-comique* singer Antoine Trial.

Although he was a prolific composer as well as a superb executant, Duport *l'ainé* (as he was usually called, to distinguish him from his even more gifted younger brother) is probably best remembered today because of the "Nine Variations for the Piano, on a Menuet by Duport," which Mozart composed in Potsdam on April 29, 1789 (K. 573). Duport was pensioned in 1811 and died in Berlin on December 31, 1818, at the age of seventy-seven.

Jean-Louis, known as Duport *cadet* or Duport *le jeune,* was born in Paris on October 4, 1749. An unconfirmed story[4] says that he was trained as a dancer, but that his brother's brilliant success as a cellist made him decide to adopt the same instrument. He studied under his brother, and made his debut at the Concert Spirituel on February 2, 1768, in a joint performance with him. Later, after hearing the Italian violinist Giovanni Battista Viotti, he adapted the style of this master to the violoncello, and developed a broad, brilliant, expressive style which soon enabled him to surpass all of his contemporaries.

At the outbreak of the French Revolution, Jean-Louis joined his brother in Berlin. He took with him to the Prussian capital a baby girl, the daughter of the violinist Guerin, whom he had adopted when her father died penniless.[5] Duport educated her well, paying particular attention to her musical talents, and eventually provided her with a substantial dowry.

In Berlin, Jean-Louis Duport married a dancer, Marie Margarethe Desplaces, ballerina of the Royal Opera, and daughter of the ballet master. She died in childbirth, at the age of twenty-six, on January 4, 1791.[6]

4. Cornélis Liégois and Edouard Nogué, *Le Violoncelle: son histoire, ses virtuoses* (Paris, n.d.), p. 110.
5. Vidal, II, 354.
6. A. C. Brachvogel, *Das alte Berliner Theater—Wesen bis zur ersten Blüte des deutschen Dramas. (Geschichte des Koniglichen Theaters zu Berlin.)* (Berlin, 1877-78), II, 271.

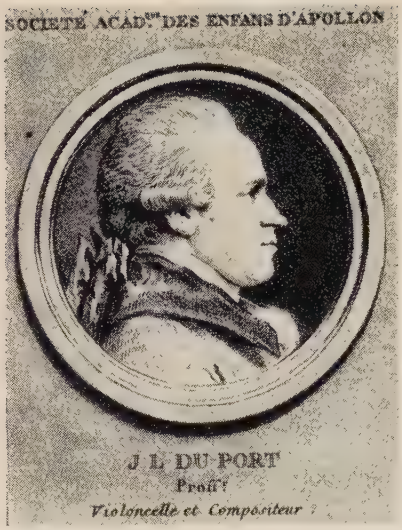
Because of his authoritative *Essai sur le doigter du violoncelle et la conduite de l'archet,* first published in 1770 and later reissued in many editions and translations, Duport *le jeune* is credited with originating the modern technique of the instrument. One of his admirers was Voltaire, whom he visited at Ferney before the French Revolution. The great philosopher gave him a charming but untranslatable compliment when he said, "Monsieur Duport, you make me believe in miracles: *vous savez faire d'un boeuf un rossignol.*"[7]

Returning to France in 1806, J.-L. Duport found that during his long absence (seventeen years) he had been completely forgotten. A concert appearance with Mlle. Isabella Colbran (later the wife of the composer Rossini) revealed again the extraordinary strength and purity of his style, and reestablished his position as the foremost cellist of his time. He entered the service of the ex-king of Spain, Charles IV, at Marseilles, but returned to Paris in 1812. In the following year he was named Professor of Violoncello at the Conservatoire, a post he had long coveted. He was also appointed to the chamber orchestra of the Empress Marie Louise.

One day when he was playing a solo during a private gathering at the Tuileries, Napoleon came in, unannounced and wearing heavy field boots. After listening to Duport with obvious pleasure, he complimented him warmly, and then suddenly seized the cello with energetic enthusiasm, clamped it between his knees, and began to saw away roughly with the bow. "How the devil do you hold it, Monsieur Duport?" asked the Emperor. Since the instrument was a priceless Stradivarius, the poor musician was already pale with fright, and his weak "Sire!" was so pathetic that Napoleon laughingly returned the cello.[8]

This same instrument, still known as the Duport Stradivarius, was inherited by Duport's son (by a second marriage), a cellist at the theatre in Lyon, who sold it to the celebrated virtuoso Auguste Joseph Franchomme for 25,000 francs (about $5,000). When it changed hands at a private sale in the 1920's, the Duport Stradivarius brought the highest price ever paid for a stringed instrument, close to $85,000.[9]

7. Liégois and Nogué, p. 111.
8. Vidal, II, 334.
9. Thomas Fassola, "Fiddler's Treasure," *High Fidelity,* March 1959, p. 48.



Jean-Louis Duport. Engraving by Mme. Lingee after C. N. Cochin (Muller Collection, Music Division, New York Public Library)

Jean-Louis Duport left a number of sonatas, romances and nocturnes for cello with violin, piano and harp. He died in Paris, September 6, 1819.

The name of Duport is remembered in ballet history because of the brilliant, erratic, versatile Louis Antoine Duport, one of the greatest dancers of his time. He advanced the technique of his art, attained considerable distinction as a choreographer, and successfully managed the Vienna Opera in one of its best periods.

There is not a shred of solid evidence to link Louis Antoine Duport with the two cellists, or with the Landrin family, or with Pierre Landrin Duport. There is, however, the strange coincidence that he was born in Paris at just about the same time as the Louis Duport who danced in America as a boy. There are other odd similarities in their lives and careers, which are listed and examined in Appendix I.

Here, we will consider only the known facts concerning the family of Louis Antoine Duport. According to the official record of his marriage, which took place in Vienna in 1812, he was the son of Joseph Robert Duport, a sculptor, and Maria Desseule.[10] Little is known about the elder Duport, except that he was the senior member of Duport et fils, Parisian bronze makers, who provided a group

10. Register of the Parish of St. Augustine, Vienna, Nov. 21, 1812.

piece called *Télémaque et Mentor* for a clock in the castle at Meudon in 1808.[11]

Louis Antoine Duport had a sister, Marie Adelaide, who became well known as a dancer, and at least two brothers: Auguste, a bassoonist, and Pierre, a musician, who appeared occasionally (but probably not very seriously) as a dancer and mime. (Pierre may also have been the *fils* who assisted his father in the making of bronzes.) It was another instance of an eighteenth-century family devoted to music and the arts, and it would not be at all surprising if some day a relationship with the cellist Duports, and the Landrins, were definitely traced.

There remains just one more Paris Duport to be mentioned before we turn to the American adventures of Pierre Landrin Duport and his young protegé, Louis. On January 18, 1809, the *Columbian Centinel* carried the following announcement: "Died.—in France, *Baptiste Duport*, a celebrated dancing master, and a tutor to the unfortunate Queen *Marie Antoinette*. He was a brother to M. *Duport*, formerly of Boston, now of New-York."

This would seem to indicate that Pierre Landrin Duport, when he emigrated to America, had left behind him a brother who had likewise discarded the surname of Landrin for that of Duport. A possible explanation may lie in the fact that the association of the Landrin family with the court of Louis XVI had been too close for comfort, and it had been necessary to supress the name during the French Revolution.

11. Thieme-Becker, *Kunstlerlexikon,* X, 166-167. Léandre Vaillat's article, "Les Richesses du Mobilier Nationale, Pendules Napoléoniennes," in *L'Art et Les Artistes,* XII (1911), p. 223, establishes that the sculptor lived at 161 rue Montmartre, Paris, in 1808. This was also the address of Louis Antoine Duport.

PIERRE LANDRIN DUPORT

When Pierre Landrin Duport arrived in Philadelphia in 1790, he was about twenty-eight years old. His father, undoubtedly, had supervised his training in music and the intricacies of social dancing, but for ballet lessons he had been sent to Maximilien Gardel, choreographer of the Paris Opéra and a noted teacher.[1] Some of his American advertisements called Duport a "Dancing Master from the Royal Academy of Paris, &c,"[2] by which we assume that he was a pupil at the Académie Royale de Musique, or Paris Opéra, when Gardel was teaching there. There is no evidence that he ever performed there, or anywhere else. From his early youth, apparently, he was interested in composing music and dances, and in teaching.

From P. L. Duport's own notebook, preserved in the Library of Congress,[3] we know that he composed his first contredanse at the age of fourteen in Paris. At twenty, he went to Dublin, where he taught in the studio of Gordon McNeill, and promptly married his daughter. An entry (probably made at a later date) in the family Bible, now in the possession of Duport's great-great-great grandson, Mr. Phillip M. Copp, states: "Peter L. Duport and Charlotte McNeill married in Dublin, Ireland, Augt. 8th 1783. By Bishop Anderson."

Although Charlotte McNeill Duport does not seem to have been a dancer, her father had been a popular performer in his youth. According to Cyril W. Beaumont,[4] Gordon M'Neille (undoubtedly

1. *Columbian Centinel* (Boston), Aug. 24, 1793.
2. *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia), Dec. 13, 1791.
3. *Mss. Dance Tunes* (see Appendix II). Because of Pierre Landrin Duport's admirable habit of noting the date and place of each composition, this little book also serves the purpose of a diary, and has been invaluable in tracing the movements of the wandering dancing master in Europe and the United States.
4. Cyril W. Beaumont, "Simon Slingsby," *Ballet,* IV, No. 5 (1947), 14.

the same person, in spite of the typical eighteenth-century variation in spelling) was especially proficient in the hornpipe. During a season at Drogheda in 1756, he taught this dance to Robert Aldridge, with whom he was again associated in the stock company of Woodward and Barry in Dublin in 1758. The Dublin troupe included some good Italian dancers and a youth named Simon Slingsby, who later developed into an artist of considerable merit, even appearing as soloist under Noverre himself, at the King's Theatre, London, in 1782.

Pierre Landrin Duport, while in Dublin, seems to have still used the name of Landrin. An advertisement in *Faulkner's Dublin Journal,* March 13, 1784, announces that Mr. McNeill's Ball is to be held on "the 24th Inst. at the Exhibition Room, William St." and ladies, on payment of one guinea and a half, will be entitled to "attend the Rehearsals, although not Scholars . . . and also to be instructed by M. LANDRIN, in the New French Dances."

Dublin, at this period, was a gay and cosmopolitan city. An English Opera House, under the management of Tommaso Giordani and a singer named Leoni, flourished in Capel Street. The Old Theatre, in Smock Alley, offered a variety of entertainments. In 1783 Alexandre Placide, who was later to lure the thirteen-year-old Louis Duport from under the wing of his guardian, appeared there many times and celebrated the Christmas holidays by quarreling so violently with the manager, Mr. Daly, that he was thrown into jail for disorderly conduct.[5]

In a more elevated vein were the performances at the Theatre Royal, Crow Street. The soprano Elizabeth Billington, only seventeen but already married to a double-bass player in the orchestra, made her operatic debut there, at about this time. Later she became world famous. Pierre Landrin Duport dedicated a composition to her, "Mrs. Billington's Waltz."[6] Her young brother, Charles Weichsel, was something of a child prodigy. His successful appearances as violin soloist and conductor at the Theatre Royal may have suggested to P. L. Duport his later exploitation of Louis Duport's musical talents.

There were many balls and masquerades during the winter season. "Shortly after the intended Fancy Ball at the Castle," an-

5. *Faulkner's Dublin Journal,* Dec. 29 and 30, 1783.
6. *Duport-Davis Mss.* (see Appendix II).

nounced the *Dublin Journal* on March 8, 1785, "we hear the Knights of St. Patrick propose giving a grand masked ball at the Rotunda; which, with the great number of elegant private entertainments continually giving [sic] by our nobility and gentry, will render our Court and capital this spring, if not as wealthy, ceremonious and fastidious as the regal residences in Europe, at least as sprightly and amusing to the lovers of pleasure and festive gaiety. What can our rich people enjoy in London or Paris to exceed this?"

Pierre Landrin Duport remained in Dublin from 1783 to 1786. His pupils and patrons included Lady Milton, for whom he composed a sarabande which she danced in 1786,[7] the influential Latouche family—Peter Latouche was a member of Parliament for County Leitrim—and other prominent members of the aristocracy. Duport enjoyed the title of "Gentleman Usher of the Castle of Ireland"[8] and probably supervised the balls given at Dublin Castle by the Duke and Duchess of Rutland. "The ball Thursday night at the Castle was the most magnificent we remember," commented the *Dublin Journal* on February 26, 1786, "About half after ten, his Grace, accompanied by his lovely Duchess, made their appearance; soon after the minuets began, which continued about an hour; the country dances then commenced, and the ball room was cleared at three o'clock. . . ."

Duport's daughter Anna was born in Dublin, probably between 1784 and 1787.[9] Sometime late in 1786 or 1787, the small family seems to have left Dublin and gone to France, but for two or three years their movements are shrouded in mystery. They may have been on bad terms with Charlotte's parents when they left, for letters of

7. *Mss. Dance Tunes,* N. 10.
8. *Dunlap's Advertiser,* Dec. 13, 1791.
9. The date of Anna Duport's birth has not been established. The death record at the Bureau of Vital Statistics in Washington, D.C., where she died on January 17, 1855, gives her age as 72. This would indicate that she was born in 1782 or early 1783. On the other hand, the Census of 1850 (District of Columbia, I, 259), which gives her birthplace as Ireland, states her age as 60. This is doubtless an error. The Duports appear to have left Ireland by 1787, and Anna accompanied them to the United States in 1790. In 1797, her father claimed that she was "not 10 years of age." Nevertheless she was married in 1803. Since P. L. Duport and Charlotte McNeill were married in August 1783, it seems reasonable to assume that Anna was born between 1784 and 1787, when they left Dublin.

hers indicate that she never communicated with her mother and father after leaving Dublin.[10]

According to the soprano Isabel Mauro French, a direct descendant of Pierre Landrin Duport, he taught music to the children of Marie Antoinette.[11] If so, it must have been during this period. Not even P. L. Duport's comprehensive notebook gives any further clues to his activities during this hiatus. This is certainly regrettable, for it may have been then that young Louis Duport attached himself to the family. He may have been with them in Ireland (or might even have been born there), but there is no evidence of this.

"At Paris, 1789" is the identification for a "Cotillion—La Jolie, or Pretty" in P. L. Duport's manuscript notebook,[12] and another page in the same book bears the cryptic entry: "french Contre-Dance or March—Paris May 16 1790-1789. quit Paris July 17th 1789."[13] Three days earlier, the Bastille had fallen.

10. "Having married at an Early age to a man of the name of Peter Landrin Duport from Paris with whom I emigrated to this Country & remaining here many years without corresponding with my family is the cause why I suppose—they thought me dead. . . ." Letter from Charlotte McNeill Duport to Charles Phillips, Esq., dated at Washington City, Jan. 26, 1820. (Transcripts of the original letters of Mrs. Duport are in the possession of Captain Charles C. Copp, U.S.N., Retired.)
11. Article on Isabel French in *The New York Times,* Dec. 19, 1936.
12. *Mss. Dance Tunes,* N. 32, second part.
13. Ibid., N. 5.

THE DEBUT OF LOUIS DUPORT

It was in 1790, according to the inscription on his gravestone, that Pierre Landrin Duport emigrated to America with his wife and small daughter. Duport's notebook has an entry (N. 8) marked "compose in New Jersey 1790." Perhaps the family landed in New York or Perth Amboy (then an important port) and spent some time in New Jersey before going to Philadelphia. At any rate it was there, in the capital and largest city of the new republic, that they first settled.

In its evolution from "Landrin" to its final form of Pierre (or Peter) Landrin Duport, the name of the dancing master went through several confusing stages, when he called himself first "Mr. D. Duport," then "Mr. De Duport," "Mr. Duport"; then "Mr. Landrin Duport," "L. Duport," "P. L. Duport" and finally the full name. Without the documentary evidence of his notebooks and manuscripts, supported by newspaper advertisements which provide an almost unbroken chronology of his activities from day to day, one might be inclined to suspect that these various forms referred to different individuals. The continuity of the newspaper notices and their invariable correspondence with the dated entries in Duport's notebooks, as well as with his published music, is, however, convincing evidence that one man lived behind the variations on the name. The major change may perhaps be explained by the supposition that immediately after his escape from revolutionary France, Duport thought it necessary to conceal his identity rather thoroughly; by 1793, when he proudly claimed the right to include "Landrin" in his name, he had been in the United States for three years and felt safe.

The mystery of Louis Duport's presence with him in Philadelphia, is not so easily explained. In the revolutionary upheaval, P. L. Duport may have brought a young friend or relative—perhaps a nephew?—to comparative safety in America. Or perhaps Louis was an illegitimate son, for apparently he was born in 1781, when P. L. Duport was only eighteen, and two years before he married Charlotte McNeill in Dublin. The gravestone of P. L. Duport and his wife (a useful source!) states that it was erected by "their affectionate *and only* child Anna [author's italics]." The mystery is still unsolved. The fact remains that from 1790 until late in 1793, P. L. Duport claimed Master Louis as his son, and depended on the youngster's unusual talents, together with his own diligence as a teacher, for the support of the family.

"Gray's Gardens. The Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music, will begin TOMORROW, at Four O'clock in the Afternoon, and conclude at 9, should the day be fair," reads an advertisement in the *Federal Gazette and Philadelphia Daily Advertiser* for August 27, 1790. "The Son of Mr. D. Duport, not 10 years of age, who has performed before the Royal Family in France, will play two Solos on the Violin." The complete program, published on the day of his debut, August 28, reveals that the contributions of "Duport, junior" were substantial. He played a violin concerto by De La Motte,[1] and joined another violinist, Mr. Emmanuel, in a "Concerto Symphony" by Davaux[2] and "several favorite tunes, with variations." M. and Mme. De L'Isle (probably likewise refugees from the French Revolution) sang duets, and there were several selections by the orchestra.

The program was successful enough to be repeated on August 30, and on September 3 the little company moved down town to "Mr. Henry Epples in Race Street." It was here that Master Duport made his American debut as a dancer. The advertisement announced: "Master Duport will dance a Ballet called the *Coquest Gardner* in a

1. Franz Lamotte, or Lamota, (c. 1751-1781), noted violinist and composer of concertos, solos and sonatas for his instrument. Popular throughout Europe, he played in Paris in 1769.
2. Jean Baptiste Davaux (c. 1737-1822), composer of numerous symphonies, concertos, etc. Most of the music which Louis Duport played in America was contemporary to his own period.

Violinist. Detail from silhouette group signed P. J. Seiff, 1783

suitable dress, with music adapted to the same."[3] (This odd title was probably an attempt to render in English *Le Jardinier coquet,* or *The Flirtatious Gardener.* Gardeners, both male and female, were a favorite subject in eighteenth-century ballet, and this little solo may have been an excerpt from a longer work, adapted by P. L. Duport.)

The same issue of the *Federal Gazette* also announced that in a reengagement at Gray's Gardens, on September 4, "The Son of Mr. Duport who has perform'd in France before the first characters, will play two solos on the violin."

A few weeks later the elder Duport opened his studio at No. 122 Second Street, Philadelphia.[4] On September 24 an advertisement in the *Federal Gazette* announced: "Just arrived from Paris. Mr. D. Duport, Dancing Master, and Professor of Dancing at the Opera House, where he has been for 6 years—and Pupil of Mons. Gardel, senior, first Dancer and Composer of Ballets at the French Opera, and Dancing Master to her Majesty the Queen of France—takes the liberty of informing the Ladies and Gentlemen of this city, that he engages to teach the newest fashioned Menuets, &c., Catilions [sic], French Country Dances, and Fancy do. for private Balls; also, the newest fashioned Country Dances. . . ."

On October 6, Duport enlarged his advertisement to call special attention to Louis: ". . . Mr. DUPORT begs leave to mention his

3. *Federal Gazette and Philadelphia Daily Advertiser,* Sept. 2, 1790.
4. Ibid., Sept. 21, 1790.

son, a lad not yet ten years old, as a speciment [sic] of his abilities in teaching.—Those persons who have been witness to his dancing, allow him to be a wonderful proficient. The performances of this youth will also excite, in the children committed to the care of Mr. Duport, a spirit of emulation, that cannot fail of contributing to their improvement. . . ."[5]

The fact that P. L. Duport was teaching his younger pupils, at least, something more than mere social dancing, is attested by the advertisement of a rival teacher, one William M'Dougall, who had been established in Philadelphia for about seventeen years. "As he professes *no other kind of Dancing than what is generally practiced in polite company,*" M'Dougall caustically announced about a month after Duport began teaching what was undoubtedly ballet to the young people of Philadelphia, "his attention will be directed to the improvement of his Scholars, in the most approved and graceful manner; and . . . due attention will be paid to their carriage and decorum. . . ."[6] Such attempts to deprecate Duport were poor Mr. M'Dougall's pitiful defense against a new and formidable rival, who was also equipped to teach "the newest and most fashionable French Cotillions and Country Dances, which he has brought over with him. . . ."[7]

Louis Duport's next appearance as a dancer took place at the ball which P. L. Duport held on January 25, 1791, at Mr. Epple's in Race Street, "in order to shew the great improvement of his Pupils." Master Duport performed "the Shepherd and Harlequin dances, in dresses and with music adapted to each." Another feature of the program was a minuet danced by "a set of Young Ladies who have received but one month's tuition."[8] P. L. Duport was proud of the efficiency of his teaching methods, and often announced public demonstrations by pupils who had been with him for a very short time.

In the meantime, the Duport family had met the man who was later to marry Anna, now a small child. Alexander Reinagle (1756-1809) was one of the most active figures in the musical life of Philadelphia. Born in Portsmouth, England, of

5. Ibid., Oct. 6, 1790.
6. Ibid., Oct. 22, 1790.
7. Ibid., Sept. 21, 1790.
8. *Dunlap's Advertiser,* Jan. 22 and 25, 1791.

Austrian extraction, he had studied with Raynor Taylor in Scotland before coming to the United States in 1786. An accomplished pianist and conductor, he was also a talented composer and wrote the music for many comic operas, ballets and pantomimes. Several of his sonatas are preserved, in manuscript, in the Library of Congress. His "Selection of the most favorite Scots tunes," issued by Thomas Dobson of Philadelphia in 1787, is considered the very first piece of secular music to be published in the United States.

A practical man of the theatre as well as a distinguished musician, Reinagle was later to be instrumental in the erection of the New Theatre, Philadelphia, which he managed with Thomas Wignell for many years. As early as 1786, Reinagle had joined with other musicians to present regular subscription concerts in Philadelphia. In 1791, these "City Concerts" were managed by Reinagle with an organist and music teacher named John C. Moller. The concerts were given at the New Rooms, Chesnut Street, on alternate Saturdays from January 22 through the month of March. Master Duport was an active participant in all but the last of the five concerts, which foreshadowed Philadelphia's later development as one of America's important musical centers.

At the first concert, January 22, Louis Duport played a "Concerto Violin" by an unnamed composer;[9] on February 5, he joined "an amateur" in a "Duetto Violin and Violincello" [sic] by Breval;[10] on February 19, his contributions were a concerto by La Motte (probably the one he had played at Gray's Gardens for his debut) and "Favorite Airs with Variations."[11] Reinagle and Moller both participated in the concerts, as well as managing them, and Reinagle's compositions frequently appeared on the programs. After the fourth concert, on March 5, Master Duport was announced to perform "a grand pantomime ballad-dance [sic], called *Le Sauvage,* with suitable dress and music. Composed by Mr. *Duport.*"[12]

On March 19, instead of the regular City Concert, there was a special event, Master Duport's Benefit Concert. The elaborate program included the overture to Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Le Devin*

9. *Dunlap's Advertiser,* Jan. 22, 1791.
10. Ibid., Feb. 1, 1791.
11. Ibid., Feb. 19, 1791.
12. Ibid., March 1, 1791. See Appendix II, for Sonneck's suggestion about the music used for *Le Sauvage.*

Second Street, Philadelphia. Engraving by W. Birch & Son, 1799 (Prints Division, New York Public Library)

du Village, a trio by Luigi Boccherini, and overtures by Abel, Vanhal and Haydn. Alexander Reinagle played one of his own sonatas, and Louis Duport played a violin concerto, danced *Le Sauvage* and concluded the evening with "a Grand Dance, called *Le Paysant Coquet,*"[13] probably the same *Jardinier Coquet* which had served for his American debut as a dancer. Master Duport did not participate in the fifth City Concert on March 26, probably because the family was busy preparing to move to Baltimore for the summer.

P. L. Duport, meanwhile, had been teaching regularly, and most of his advertisements mentioned his gifted and precocious son. On January 25 appeared the announcement of the elder Duport's first American publication, ". . . a new Set of fashionable Country-Dances, with figures and English steps, for the *thirteen states,* which every one has their names in rotation.—To be disposed of at No. 122, south Second-street."[14] We know of no copy of this 1791 Philadelphia

13. Ibid., March 16, 1791.

14. Ibid., Jan. 25, 1791.

edition of the *United States Country Dances* which has survived, but the Library of Congress has an edition published in New York in 1800, which includes sixteen dances named for the states (by this time Vermont, Kentucky and Tennessee had been added to the original thirteen), with *Washington's Minuet and Gavotte* and *Duport's Hornpipe.*[15]

During the winter of 1791 the first native American dancer, John Durang, was appearing regularly with the Old American Company at the Southwark Theatre. The Duports may have seen the "Hornpipe on 13 eggs, Blindfolded," which he performed there on November 7, 1790.[16] A French refugee named André, advertised as "a gentleman from Europe," danced there in February 1791. Dissatisfaction with his performance is attested by a letter published February 11, signed "Z," and addressed to the theatre managers, Hallam and Henry: "You cannot reasonably flatter yourselves with the hope of further indulgence towards some of your company," wrote "Z," "but, on the contrary, you may depend ere long to hear hiss! hiss! off! off! whenever . . . they are not fully qualified. The manner in which your *gentleman* dancer from Europe was on Saturday received, you may consider a specemen [sic] of this determination. . . ."[17]

It is unlikely that either Durang or André gave Louis Duport any serious competition, even though he was still a child. He had danced on the night before the unfortunate debut of the "gentleman from Europe," and the excellence of his performance may have raised the critical standards of the local audience.

On the other hand, Pierre Landrin Duport had a resourceful rival in Stephen Sicard, who had preceded him to Philadelphia, and who claimed to have been a pupil of Gaeten Vestris and also "assistant Master, for many years, to the celebrated Monsieur Gardel,

15. Oscar George Theodore Sonneck, *A Bibliography of Early Secular American Music,* rev. and enl., William Treat Upton (Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.), 1945, p. 98. The advertisements for the first edition of the *United States Country Dances* are signed "D. Duport"; the edition of 1800 was "Composed in America by Mr. P .Landrin Duport, Professor of dancing from Paris. . . ." This is another link in the chain of evidence that "D. Duport" and Pierre Landrin Duport were identical.
16. Lillian Moore, "John Durang, the first American Dancer," *Chronicles of the American Dance,* ed. Paul Magriel (New York, 1948), p. 24.
17. *Federal Gazette,* Feb. 11, 1791.

Teacher of all the Royal Family of France. . . ."[18] Like Duport, Sicard frequently presented his students in public performances, and on February 3, 1791, sixteen of his pupils appeared in his timely and topical ballet, *The Congress' Return.*[19] Sicard continued to teach in Philadelphia throughout Duport's residence there. At one of his balls in 1792, his pupils gave an elaborate program including a Plain Minuet, a *Pas Grave* by a young lady and gentleman, an *Allemand à Trois,* a Hornpipe, the *Menuet de la Cour,* and a minuet "with a great variety of accompaniments" danced by "a set of 10 young ladies."[20] The ballet *Congress Returned* (with slightly altered title) was repeated that year, too.[21]

Still another Frenchman teaching dancing in Philadelphia was James Robardet, who arrived in January 1791, after having taught in New York when it was the capital of the nation.[22] Perhaps it was this additional competition which made P. L. Duport decide to spend the spring and summer in another city.

18. *Dunlap's Advertiser,* Sept. 20, 1791. This same Sicard may have been responsible for the French dance *La Sicard,* no. 19 in the *Deuxième Recueil de Pot Poury François les plus à la Mode Qui se Danse Chez la Reine,* and for *La Nouvelle Sicard,* no. 37 in the *Troisiènne Recueil.* . . . These collections of dances were published in Paris about 1780 (Dance Collection, New York Public Library).
19. Ibid., Jan. 21, 1792.
20. Ibid., Feb. 29, 1792.
21. Ibid., March 22, 1792.
22. Ibid., Jan. 23, 1791.

BALTIMORE TO BOSTON

Early in April, the Duports travelled to Baltimore, where on the 13th P. L. Duport opened his dancing school at Mrs. Ridgely's, in Gay Street. His very first advertisement mentioned "HIS SON, who is allowed to be a wonderful proficient, by those who have been witnesses to his Dancing." From the same announcement, we know that he charged one guinea per month for three classes a week, and that his daily schedule was arduous enough to make a present-day teacher quail:

> Plan of Mr. DE DUPORT'S School, for Children and grown Persons.
>
> I. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, he will teach six Children, from 8 o'Clock, in the Morning, until 10.
> From 10 o'Clock until 12, six grown Persons.
> From 12 o'Clock until 2, six Children.
> From 5 o'Clock until 8, in the Evening, ten grown Persons.
>
> II. Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday Mornings, will be allotted for Private Teaching; and from half-past four o'Clock, until 8, in the Evening, twelve Children.[1]

In June, Duport transferred his school from Mrs. Ridgely's to Mr. John Starck's, at the corner of Hanover and Market Streets. Presumably the change was motivated by the need for larger quarters, for Mr. Starck's was a well-known inn, the Indian Queen. There Louis Duport made his Baltimore debut on June 30, 1791. The students danced several Cotillions, a double Minuet, and a Perigourdine. Master Duport played a violin concerto by Stamitz and several "airs, with variations," and performed the "SHEPHERDS CHARACTER DANCE, in Dresses and with Music adapted to each." The announcement of this performance, "Master LOUIS DE DUPORT'S

1. *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser,* April 12, 1791.

Benefit-Night,"[2] is one of the very few times when his full name was used; more frequently, he was called simply "Master Duport."

His dancing must have impressed the Baltimoreans, for on July 11 there was another performance "by particular desire."[3] There seems to have been an attempt, through the use of appropriate costume, music, scenery and mime, to make these little dances of Louis Duport's something more than mere divertissements. There was an effort towards a synthesis of several arts, as in full-scale ballet.

By September the Duports were back in Philadelphia, ready for a busy season. The dancing school at No. 68 Spruce Street re-opened on September 1. The newspapers for October 22 carried the news that the President of the United States—George Washington, of course—had just returned from Mount Vernon. Philadelphia was a bustling metropolis, and swarms of French refugees continued to add to its population.

2. Ibid., June 14, 1791.

3. Ibid., July 5 and 8, 1791.

Master De Duport's Benefit.

BY PARTICULAR DESIRE,
Master DE DUPORT, *will have another BENEFIT, on* MONDAY *the* 11*th Inſtant, at the* INDIAN-QUEEN TAVERN.

1. A DUETTO, compoſed by Mr. BREVAL, and performed by Maſter DE DUPORT.
2. SOLO CONCERTO, compoſed by Mr. JARNOVIK, and performed by Maſter DE DUPORT.

CHARACTER DANCES, compoſed by M. DE DUPORT.

1. LE SAUVAGE in PANTOMIME.
2. HARLEQUIN; an ENTERTAINMENT.

Theſe DANCES will be performed with DRESSES ſuitable to each, and the SAUVAGE PANTOMIME will be rendered more natural from the Appearance of a FOREST.

☞ The BALL will be opened by EIGHT YOUNG LADIES, who are to dance Two DOUBLE MINUETS, and afterwards a DOUBLE COTILLION will be performed by *Sixteen*.

ALSO,

A SINGLE MINUET and PERIGOURDINE, by Two of the SCHOLARS.

*** TICKETS may be had of M. DE DUPORT, at Mr. JOHN STARCK's, *(Indian-Queen Tavern)* at SEVEN SHILLINGS and SIX-PENCE each.

The BALL will begin *preciſely at Seven o'Clock.*

Baltimore, July 4, 1791.

Notice from *Maryland Journal,* July 5, 1791

One of these refugees was the painter Philip A. Peticolas, who found lodgings with Pierre Landrin Duport, and advertised as a teacher of drawing and miniature painting.[4] Born in Italy in 1760, Peticolas was to spend the rest of his life in the United States. He painted George Washington, Francis Scott Key and other notables, dying in Richmond, Virginia, in 1843. If he left any portraits of the Duport family, they are either lost or unidentified.

During the winter of 1791-92, a company of French acrobats and tight-rope dancers, headed by two stars known as "M. Du Moulin"[5] and "the Young Florentine," enlivened the Philadelphia stage. Their sensational tricks may have inspired the one featured by Master Louis Duport at his next appearance (at P. L. Duport's Ball, in January 1792), when he performed *"Dances Espagnoles, Variées ainsi que La* Music, playing on the Violin at the same time, in Dresses adapted to the Characters."[6] His contributions at a later ball, at the New Rooms in Chesnut Street on March 12, were more dignified, consisting of "Variations on the Violin" and then, quite simply, "a new BALLET DANCE, in a suitable dress."[7]

In the meantime, P. L. Duport was instructing his pupils in figured minuets arranged by the masters Jean Dauberval and Maximilien Gardel.[8] During this year, 1792, a minuet composed by Duport was danced by two young ladies, his pupils, in the presence of Martha Washington,[9] while a "fancy Menuit" was danced—possibly by Louis Duport—before George Washington.[10] This performance may have taken place at the ball given by the City Assembly on February 21 to honor Washington's birthday the next day.

In May, the celebrated Alexandre Placide arrived in Philadelphia, with his group of dancers, acrobats and mimes, to appear with the Old American Company at the theatre in Southwark.

4. *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser,* Nov. 28, 1791.
5. Ibid., Nov. 25, 1791. There is nothing to indicate that this Du Moulin was related to the famous Dumoulin brothers, François, Pierre, and David, who shone so brilliantly at the Paris Opéra during the first half of the eighteenth century. All three of them had retired by 1751, long before the rope-dancer appeared on the scene.
6. Ibid., Dec. 13, 1791.
7. Ibid., March 1, 1792. This announcement is the first in which the simple name "Duport" replaced "De Duport."
8. Ibid., Dec. 13, 1791.
9. *Mss. Dance Tunes,* N. 35: "fancy Menuit with figure Dance by two young Ladies in the presence of Mrs. Washington in 1792—franch Cotillion."
10. Ibid., N. 40: "fancy Menuit Dance before Genl. Washington 1792."

Placide was a strange combination of accomplished performer, clever manager and disreputable mountebank. He had been a Paris favorite when he headed the troupe known as the *Grands Danseurs du Roi,* in the early 1780's. Famous for his exploits as a rope-dancer, notorious for his brawls and intrigues, he was an expert swordsman, mime, comedian and tumbler, who knew enough about ballet to stage some very attractive little dance-dramas based on Paris models, and to appear on occasion in dance roles, himself. Later, in his capacity as manager of a travelling troupe and a permanent company in Charleston, he was to exert a cardinal influence on the career of young Louis Duport.

The Placide performances were probably the first entirely professional ballets which the young Duport had seen since leaving Paris. The ballerina of the company was the fourteen-year-old "Madame" Placide, only three years older than Louis, but already an experienced trouper. "Madame" only by courtesy, she was actually a French girl named Suzanne Vaillande, whose later marriage to the singer Louis Douvillier was to split the Charleston company in two, just before Louis Duport's mysterious disappearance. Whatever her background and later adventures, Mme. Placide (as she was always designated on the bills) must have been a delightful dancer, and her youth and beauty probably held a special appeal for her young compatriot, who had now reached the age of eleven.

The Placide repertoire included such "dancing ballets" as *The Bird Catcher, The Merry Girl, The Return of the Laborers,* and *The Old Schoolmaster Grown Young,* all of which traced their ancestry back to productions at the Théâtre de Nicolet or other popular stages of the Paris boulevards, and pantomimes like *The King of the Genii, or, Harlequin Neptune; The Old Soldier;* and *Harlequin Balloonist, or, Pierrot in the Clouds,* some of which may have been recalled from Placide's days at Sadler's Wells, London. With his inseparable companion and rival on the rope, the "Little Devil," whose real name was Paolo Redigé, he had first appeared in the English theatre in 1781. Originally engaged as rope-dancers and acrobats, the two Frenchmen soon became adept at English pantomime. They later appeared in many productions staged by old Giuseppe Grimaldi, whose three-year-old son Joey (making his precocious debut that same season) was to become, a quarter of a century later, London's beloved "king of clowns."

In addition to the "Little Devil," who had accompanied him to the United States, Placide's company in Philadelphia included the American dancers John Durang and John E. Martin (the latter perhaps better known as an actor), a M. Dumas, and a puzzling "Monsieur Simonet" who occasionally danced but specialized in tumbling, although he bore a name distinguished in eighteenth-century ballet.[11] Members of the Old American Company of actors, some of whom Louis Duport was to meet again in Charleston, doubled in mime roles when required. The performance usually included minuets, hornpipes, allemandes and gavottes, with the dancing of Mme. Placide prominently featured.

The Placide company played at the Southwark for five weeks, and there is little doubt that their performances enchanted little Louis, even though the elder Duport, with his more solid artistic background, may not have been much impressed.

Early in 1793, Pierre Landrin Duport decided to transfer his school to Boston. The active competition in Philadelphia may have been one of the reasons. Still another Frenchman, a Monsieur Dozel, from Paris, had opened a school of dancing "either in the English or French stile."[12] It is possible, however, that Duport's decision was clinched by an account which appeared in the Philadelphia papers in January, describing a Boston Town Meeting which had demanded repeal of the long-standing ordinance prohibiting theatrical performances there. John Quincy Adams and Paul Revere had been among those who attacked the old law, which dated from 1750. It was not actually repealed until several years later, but it was no longer enforced after this period.

Louis Duport had not danced in public for some time, but his last two months in Philadelphia were full of activity. For an event

11. François Simonet, trained at the Paris Opéra, was ballet master at the King's Theatre, London, 1777-1779 and 1781, staging several ballets there. During the season of 1782, he danced in the works of Jean Georges Noverre, then resident choreographer at that theatre. (see Ivor Guest, *The Romantic Ballet in England* [London, 1954], pp. 147, 149, 150, 164.) Rosine and Solange Simonet (perhaps his daughters?) were *première* and *deuxième danseuses,* respectively, at the Théâtre National, Paris, under the choreographer Sébastien Gallet, in 1793-94. (Louis-Henry Lecomte, *Histoire des Théâtres de Paris,* IV: *Le Théâtre National* [Paris, 1907], p. 83.
12. *Dunlap's Advertiser,* Oct. 29, 1791.

advertised as "*Master Duport's* BALL," on January 15, 1793, he announced two new numbers:

> The Ball will be Opened precisely at Seven o'Clock.
> Master DUPORT will then Perform,
> 1st. A SPANISH BALLET, with suitable *Dresses*; after which the Company will commence Dancing.
> 2nd. A BALLET, of Noble, otherwise *Henry the IVth,* with suitable *Dress.*[13]

At a second benefit ball, on January 28, Louis Duport repeated his old favorites, *The Shepherd* and *The Savage,* and the new *Henry the IV.*[14] This was advertised as "Master Duport's last performance in this City," but actually he was to make two more very important appearances before the family moved to Boston.

For a year, the drama-loving public of Philadelphia had lived in eager anticipation of the completion of their magnificent New Theatre, which was to be an exact replica of the Theatre Royal at Bath, England. The prime instigators of this enterprise were Alexander Reinagle, the Duports' good friend, and the actor Thomas Wignell, who had resigned from the Old American Company after violent disagreements with the managers, Lewis Hallam and John Henry, in 1791. Wignell and Reinagle had succeeded in forming a committe of prominent citizens for the construction of a new theatre.

13. Ibid., Jan. 9, 1793.
The liberal and progressive Henry IV, first of the Bourbon kings of France, was a favorite subject for eighteenth-century choreographers, who were inspired by Charles Collé's play *La Partie de Chasse d'Henri Quatre* (1764). Perhaps the best known ballet dealing with him was Gasparo Angiolini's *La Caccia di Enrico IV,* produced at the Teatro Ducale di Milano during the summer of 1773. (Libretto in the collection of Dr. Walter Toscanini.) An earlier version of the same work, also by Angiolini, had been given at the Teatro San Benedetto, Venice, during the carnival season that same year, under the title *Il Re alla Caccia.* (Oscar G. T. Sonneck, *Catalogue of Opera Librettos printed before 1800* [Washington, 1914], I, 1019.) Vincenzo Galeotti, a pupil of Angiolini and later the noted choreographer of the Royal Danish Theatre, presented *La Caccia d'Enrico IV* in Genoa in 1784. (Sonneck, *Catalogue,* I, 359.) Riccardo Blek, a dancer of Dutch extraction, active chiefly in Italy, staged a version of *La Caccia di Enrico IV,* possibly based on Angiolini's, at Parma in 1776. (Libretto in the Library of Santa Cecilia, Rome. [Information from Dr. Walter Toscanini.]) Pietro Guidice staged the work in Lucca in 1790. (Sonneck, *Catalogue,* I, 628.) Charles Le Picq, pupil and protégé of Noverre, produced *La Partie de Chasse d'Henri Quatre* at the King's Theatre, London, in 1784. (Guest, p. 150.) Louis Duport's dance may have been suggested by one of these ballets.
14. *Dunlap's Advertiser,* Jan. 23, 1793.

Congress Hall and New Theatre in Chesnut Street, Philadelphia. Engraving by W. Birch & Sons (Prints Division, New York Public Library)

The cornerstone had been laid on August 30, 1792, and by now the splendid structure was completed. Horseshoe-shaped, like a typical opera house, it had two tiers of boxes, and held 2,000 people. The spacious stage was 36 feet wide and 71 feet deep, with ample wings, a generous number of dressing rooms, and two greenrooms.

The Philadelphians were impatient to see their marvellous new edifice, but when it was finished Wignell, co-manager with Reinagle, was in England, still looking for recruits for the acting company. Reinagle decided that, instead of waiting for the arrival of the actors, he would open the theatre with a gala concert.

The grand opening took place on February 2, 1793. The performers, led by Reinagle himself, included Mrs. Owen Morris, a popular singer and actress who had seceded from the Old American Company, and such well-known musicians as Louis Boullay, Francis Mallet, and Messrs. Chambers, Guenin, Harper and "Saloman" (probably the flutist George Edward Saliment), all prominent in the musical life of the city. Louis Duport also participated in the great event:

Between the first and second act, a DANCE, in the character of *Harlequin,* by Master *Duport.*
To conclude with a GRAND DANCE, called *Le Noble,* or *Henry the Fourth,* by Master *Duport.*[15]

Curiosity about the New Theatre was so great, and the concert so successful, that a second one was added by popular demand on February 7. This time Master Duport played a violin concerto, danced *L'Espagnole* and added a new number, "a DANCE, in the Character of PUNCH."[16]

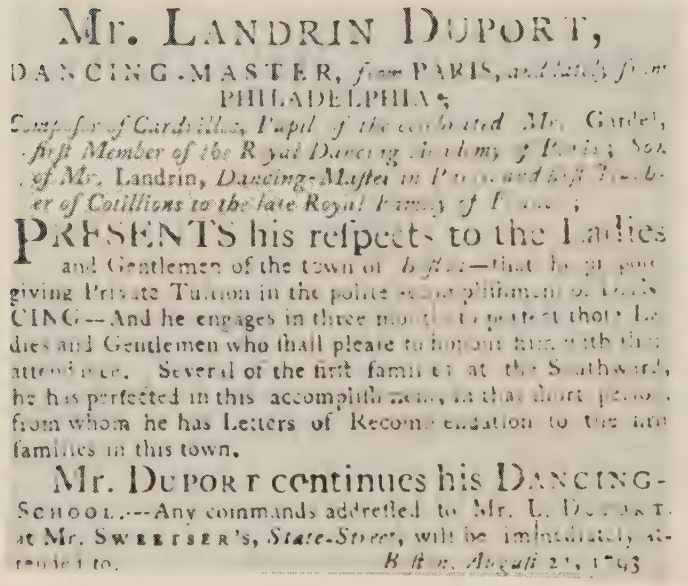
Meanwhile Pierre Landrin Duport was winding up his affairs in Philadelphia. On March 18 he announced: "Mr. *Duport's* Last BALL In this City, This Evening, the 18th Instant, *At Mr.* Oeller's *Hotel, in Chesnut street.* MR. DUPORT hopes that the Ladies and Gentlemen of this City will, by favouring him with their Company, have an Opportunity of judging the Performances of his Scholars. . . ."[17]

As it turned out, Duport's decision to leave Philadelphia was opportune, for the summer of 1793 brought a raging epidemic of cholera, which caused the postponement of the opening of Wignell and Reinagle's drama season at the New Theatre for months, ruined every public enterprise and decimated the population of the city.

By this time, however, Duport and his family were solidly established in Boston. It was there that he began to use the name of "Landrin Duport," and advertised that he was the "Son of Mr. Landrin, Dancing-Master in Paris, and first Teacher of Cotillions to the late Royal Family of France." He had taken care to provide himself with letters of recommendation from "several of the first families at the Southward . . . to the first families in this town,"[18] and by mid-September his classes had progressed enough for him to announce his first performance. In the "Display of Dancing" which he presented at the Assembly-Room "over the New-South-School" on September 11, his pupils danced a Minuet, there was a "SOLO, danced by a young lady," and Louis Duport played the violin, danced *The Noble,* and concluded the program with a "HORN-PIPE, in a fancy dress."[19]

15. Ibid., Jan. 31, 1793.
16. Ibid., Feb. 7, 1793.
17. Ibid., March 18, 1793.
18. *Columbian Centinel,* Aug. 24, 1793.
19. Ibid., Sept. 11, 1793.

This was to be Louis Duport's only appearance in Boston, and his last under the auspices of his guardian. Pierre Landrin Duport remained in Boston for several busy years, teaching, producing ballets and eventually supervising his daughter's debut as a dancer. Louis, however, was to leave Boston within a few short weeks. After October, 1793, he seems to have broken off all contact with his family. The thirteen-year-old boy now embarked on an independent career.



Mr. LANDRIN DUPORT,

DANCING-MASTER, *from* PARIS, *and lately from* PHILADELPHIA;

Son-in-law of Cardvillac, Pupil of the celebrated Mr. Gardel, *first Member of the Royal Dancing Academy of Paris; Son of Mr.* Landrin, *Dancing-Master in Paris, and first Teacher of Cotillions to the late Royal Family of France;*

PRESENTS his respects to the Ladies and Gentlemen of the town of *Boston*—that he proposes giving Private Tuition in the polite accomplishment of DANCING—And he engages in three months to perfect those Ladies and Gentlemen who shall please to honour him with their attendance. Several of the first families at the Southward, he has perfected in this accomplishment, in that short period, from whom he has Letters of Recommendation to the first families in this town.

Mr. DUPORT continues his DANCING-SCHOOL.—Any commands addressed to Mr. L. DUPORT, at Mr. SWEETSER'S, *State-Street*, will be immediately attended to. *Boston, August 24, 1793*

Notice from *Columbian Centinel,* August 24, 1793

THE AMERICAN CAREER OF LOUIS DUPORT

During the spring of 1793, Alexandre Placide had been performing in Boston. His company included the versatile singer, dancer and actor Louis Antoine Douvillier and his wife, recent refugees from the race riots in Santo Domingo. M. and "Mme." Placide led the dancers, and the actors included Joseph Harper and the Messrs. Kenny, Watts, Huggins and Adams, while M. Tronche provided good competition for Placide on the tight-rope.

In June, most of the company moved to Newport, Rhode Island, where Placide and Harper had just built a new theatre. There they were joined by another popular rope-dancer, Laurent Spinacuta. Throughout the summer they presented a varied repertoire, with the Douvilliers prominently featured in comic opera, while the Placides starred in ballet and pantomime. By the middle of October, the season was drawing to an end, its closing hastened by the fear of cholera, for the dread plague was advancing northward from Philadelphia. On October 29, however, the *Newport Mercury* carried the announcement of a very special performance, to take place two days later: the Newport debut of Master Duport.

Did P. L. Duport approve of Louis' engagement with Placide? Had he sent his "son" off to dance with a troupe of wandering players? The Duports may have arrived in Boston before Placide left the city for Newport. Did Alexandre Placide see Louis dance there? Did he lure him away from home with promises of exciting travels and rich professional experiences?

It seems more than likely that Louis left home without permission, if he did not actually run away to join Placide. His departure may have caused bitter feelings at home, for all trace of his existence has vanished from the family records still owned by the descendants of Pierre Landrin Duport.

At any rate, Louis Duport's first appearance on October 31 was announced with considerable flourish:

> For One Night only
> THEATRE
> NEWPORT
>
> Messieurs Harper and Placide, anxious on all Occasions to amuse the Public, have for that Purpose engaged MASTER DUPORT (a young Gentleman of Thirteen Years of Age) to perform that Evening, whose Abilities, as a BALLETTE DANCER have been acknowledged and admired by every Audience before whom he has had the Honour of performing on the Continent of America. . . .

The notice went on to describe tight-rope dancing by Placide, Tronche and Spinacuta, "after which MASTER DUPORT will perform A celebrated SPANISH DANCE, called, A GRAND FANDANGO, with CASTINETS [sic] in his Hands. . . ." (This is our first intimation that Master Duport included castanet-playing among his accomplishments.)

After a humorous address by Mr. Harper, there was to be

> A DANCING BALLETTE,
> Called,
> THE BIRD CATCHER.

No cast was listed for the ballet, but probably young Duport joined M. and Mme. Placide, who had starred in earlier Newport performances of the same production.

Next:

> *Master Duport* will perform *On the Violin,* the favourite Air of MALBRO', &c., with Variations. A Grand Pantomime ENTERTAINMENT (never performed here) called
> HARLEQUIN PASTRY COOK
> In which *Master Duport* will dance a Hornpipe, in the Character of a Sailor. . . .[1]

The performance closed with a grand display of fireworks.

After this fine debut, Master Duport seems to have vanished from public view for nearly six months. There is no evidence that

1. *Newport Mercury,* Oct. 29, 1793.

he returned to Boston, where Pierre Landrin Duport continued to teach. If he did go back, P. L. Duport did not feature him at his balls and student performances, as had been his regular custom heretofore.

It is much more probable that Louis accompanied the Placide troupe on their wanderings around the United States, but their itinerary at this period has never been traced. At any rate, the Placides turned up in Charleston, South Carolina, early in April 1794, and promptly joined a group of refugees from Santo Domingo in the establishment of a French theatre. Alexandre Placide made his Charleston debut on April 10, 1794; Mme. Placide danced her favorite role of Rosetta, in *The Bird Catcher,* on the 12th, and Master Duport made his first appearance nine days later, on April 21.

If, during the six-month interval from October 31, 1793, to April 21, 1794, young Louis Duport somehow managed to get back to Paris and enroll in the Paris Opéra ballet school, then he may have been the great Louis Antoine Duport. Both Louis Duport and his sister Marie Adelaide ("Minette") are listed as pupils of Deshayes, *"faisant le service de l'Opéra,"* in the *Almanach des Spectacles de Paris* for 1794 (XLIII, 79), which covers the period immediately prior to February 26, 1794. Admittedly, the conjecture that a thirteen-year-old boy may have made the long voyage to France (a matter of six to eight weeks), re-joined his real family, entered the Paris Opéra school, remained a couple of months, and then turned around and sailed back to America to join a company of comparative strangers in Charleston, is wildly improbable. It is not absolutely impossible, however; and since this single entry in the *Almanach des Spectacles* is the only piece of evidence we have yet unearthed which seriously challenges the theory that the "American" and the "French" Louis Duports were the same, it should be carefully noted.

Charleston, in 1794, was to become an active center of ballet production. Early in that year some French actors from Santo Domingo had performed for one night at the Charleston Theatre. The leader of this group was Jean Baptiste Francisquy (or Franciscqui), a dancer and choreographer with an extensive knowledge of the ballet repertoire of his time. Although his early life is somewhat obscure, he was born in Bordeaux[2] and had probably studied under

2. T. Allston Brown, *History of the New York Stage* (New York, 1870), p. 134.

Maximilien Gardel[3] and danced under Jean Favier's direction in Marseilles.[4] His comrades included the dancer Jean Baptiste Val and his wife, and a M. Dainville who seems to have been an actor, dancer, and singer.

These earlier arrivals were soon joined by the Placides and Spinacuta. On April 10, 1794, the united forces opened the French Theatre (later known as the Church Street or City Theatre) with a performance of Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Pygmalion,* and the "grand ballet pantomime" *The Three Philosophers, or, The Dutch Coffee House*, starring Mrs. Val, Dainville, Val and Francisquy. Placide and Spinacuta danced on the tight-rope.[5] Mme. Placide made her debut two days later in *The Bird Catchers,* which was embellished by a new *Pas de Quatre* danced by Mmes. Placide and Val, with Placide and Francisquy.[6]

Robinson Crusoe, a popular two-act pantomime, which had been in the repertoire of the Old American Company, and which Placide and Harper had presented in Newport during the preceding summer, was produced for Louis Duport's first appearance on April 21. Placide played Crusoe, and Francisquy had the principal dance role, Friday. In the second act, there was a "grand entertainment given to Robinson Crusoe, with dances, songs, &c. &c., by Mme. Placide, daughter of the Captain, madame Val, in the character of Lesette, Master Duporte, 13 years of age, being his first appearance, he will dance the Grande Folie Despagne [sic] with variations; Taylor, Monsieur Val; Hair Dresser, Signior Spinacuta; a Negroe dance, by Mr. Francisqui; a dance by Madame Val, another dance, by Mr. Francisqui . . . the whole to conclude with the Minuet de la Cour, by Mr. and Madame Placide."[7] There was new scenery, by Mons. Audin, and apparently nothing was neglected to make the performance a brilliant one.

Master Duport made his next appearance on April 25, as a Shepherd in the grand ballet pantomime *The Rose and the Bud* (*La*

3. *Almanach des Spectacles de Paris,* XXVI (1777), 20, and XXVII (1778), 19. (The name is spelled Francisque; Jean Baptiste Francisquy used Francisque, Francisqui and, most often, Francisquy.)
4. *Indice de'spettacoli teatrali,* 1781-82 (Milano, 1782), p. 61; Ibid., 1782-83 (1783), pp. 93-94. Here the name is spelled Franceschi.
5. *South Carolina State Gazette,* April 10, 1794.
6. Ibid., April 11, 1794.
7. Ibid., April 21, 1794.

Alexandre Placide (Harvard Theatre Collection)

Rose et le Bouton). The features of this performance were a *pas de deux* by Francisquy and Mme. Placide, and another by Master Duport and "Miss Duthé, 10 years of age, (being her first appearance on any stage)."[8] *La Rose et le Bouton* had been in the repertoire of the Grands Danseurs du Roi, Placide's old Company, in 1788.[9]

The identity of little Miss Duthé, who often danced with Louis Duport during the next two years, remains a mystery. It would be interesting to trace some connection between her and the Paris Opéra dancer Rosalie Duthé,[10] but we have been unable to do so.

Louis Duport, at thirteen, was too young and small to play important roles in the many ballets and divertissements produced by Placide and Francisquy. He usually appeared in the divertissement, and often danced separate numbers between the acts of plays.

8. Ibid., April 25, 1794.
9. *La Rose et le Bouton* was produced in Philadelphia on June 4, 1794, just six weeks after Placide's Charleston production of it. The cast included Mme. Anna Gardie, with Messrs. Bellona, Darley, junior, and Blissett. (Dunlap and Claypoole's *American Daily Advertiser,* June 4, 1794.) A ballet of the same title was danced at the King's Theatre, London, nearly half a century later, in 1827, when James D'Egville was ballet master and Carlo Blasis a member of the company.
10. Catherine-Rosalie Gérard (1748-1830), known as Mlle. Duthé, lived in England from 1786 until 1816. See *Souvenirs de Mlle. Duthé de l'Opéra,* with introduction and notes by Paul Ginisty (Paris, n.d.).

His popularity with the public and his importance to the company may be gauged, however, by the size of the letters in which his name usually appeared in the newspaper advertisements. Almost invariably, he was featured over the older and more experienced members of the company, and the most prominent billing would go to "a HORNPIPE, by MASTER DUPORT" (as in *Harlequin Doctor, or, The Power of Magic,* on April 29) or *"A Character Dance,* by *M. Duport"* (on May 1). Even when he stepped back into the ensemble, as on May 15, when he and Mr. Clifford were listed as "Country People" in the pantomime *The Wood Cutter, or, The Militia Man,* his name appeared further down, in the largest letters on the bill, to announce "A DANCE, by MASTER DUPORT."

In the four-act "heroic pantomime" *Le Belle Dorothée,* on May 27, he had the appropriate role of a page-boy. The "Grand, Historical, and Tragi-Heroic Pantomime in Three Acts, called MIRZA AND LINDOR," produced on June 7, found him as a "Negro musician, favorite of Mondor." This was probably an adaptation of Maximilien Gardel's *Mirza,* produced at the Paris Opéra in 1779, with music by Gossec. The original story concerned the American Revolution; the Charleston version was set on an island in America, and featured "Dances, Fights, and Military Evolutions."[11]

The Charleston productions of these three and four-act pantomimes were lavish. There were elaborate scenery and costumes, and the theatre was equipped with complicated machinery to produce spectacular and startling effects.

The French Theatre prospered, and in June M. and Mme. Louis Douvillier joined the company. They had already appeared with the Placides in Boston and Newport in 1793. Douvillier was an excellent singer and actor, who could also hold his own in pantomime. His first wife was a virtuoso opera singer. Douvillier had served his acting apprenticeship at the Théâtre des Variétes Amusantes in Paris and had acted in Santo Domingo before the bloody revolution there had forced him to flee to the United States in 1793.[12] In Charleston he made his debut on June 12, 1794, in the title role of Beaumarchais' comedy *Le Barbier de Séville.* Mme. Douvillier's first appearance

11. *South Carolina State Gazette,* June 12, 1794.
12. Jean Fouchard, *Artistes et Repertoire des scènes de Sainte-Domingue* (Port-au-Prince, 1955), p. 21.

took place on June 14, when she appeared with her husband in Monsigny's opera *The Deserter.*

On June 28 Louis Duport, who had been appearing regularly in more conventional divertissements, danced a hornpipe while accompanying himself on the violin.[13] He had attempted this same *tour de force* once before, in Philadelphia. During his stay in Charleston, however, he concentrated more and more on dancing, and played the violin less and less. When he did play, he does not seem to have taken it very seriously, and he seldom attempted anything so heavy as a concerto. He was, of course, surrounded by dancers, and he probably took advantage of the opportunity to study with Francisquy, who was a capable and well-grounded choreographer.

"Master Duport, takes the liberty to present his respects to the polite audience of Charleston, humbly hopes they will accept his juvenile efforts to please, as every exertion will be used to merit their patronage and favors," read an announcement in the *South Carolina State Gazette and Daily Advertiser,* July 14, 1794. At this, his first Charleston benefit, Louis Duport played the Jarnowick violin concerto and appeared in *The Bird Catchers,* dancing a *pas de deux* with little Miss Duthé and a solo hornpipe. The Placides and Spinacuta participated, but more noteworthy, in retrospect, was the appearance of "Masters T. and C. Sully, and Mr. M. Sully." These young performers were Thomas Sully, later the distinguished portrait painter, and his brothers Chester and Matthew.

The Sully family had originally come from England, and settled in Charleston in 1792. Matthew Sully, Sr., was an English actor. His sister had married the actor-manager Thomas Wade West, who supervised the building of the Charleston Theatre on Broad Street in 1793. Here Matthew Sully and seven of his nine children—four of the five girls, and all except Lawrence, of the boys—made frequent appearances. Matthew, Jr., was an accomplished actor, acrobat and Harlequin, and soon became quite a popular favorite. Thomas and Chester confined themselves to "surprizing feats of manly activity," or acrobatic tumbling, while the sisters, Charlotte, Elizabeth, Harriet and Julia, were versatile little dancers. (Jane never

13. *South Carolina State Gazette,* June 28, 1794.

appeared on the stage.) While still a boy, Thomas Sully was apprenticed to a miniature painter, Joseph Belzons, under whose guidance his genius soon became evident.[14] At the time of his appearance in support of Louis Duport, however, Master T. Sully was only eleven, two years the junior of the youthful beneficiary. Even so, might he not have sketched the dancer? If he did, the results are lost.

During 1794, many well-known ballets were produced in Charleston. *La Chercheuse d'Esprit,* which had been the favorite vehicle of Marie Madeleine Guimard and was created for her by Maximilien Gardel in 1777, was presented at the French Theatre on July 16, 1794, with Mme. Val in Guimard's role of Nicette, and Mme. Placide as Finette.[15] *Blaise and Babet,* a two-act ballet based on the opera by Dezède, had its premiere at Francisquy's benefit, July 23.[16] A topical and patriotic production was *American Independence, or, The 4th of July 1776,* a three-act pantomime directed by Jean Baptiste Val, for his benefit performance, and belatedly presented on July 30.[17] Master Duport was prominent in all of these productions, dancing solos or *pas de deux.*

On August 8, the ballet-pantomime *The Two Woodcutters, or, The Merry Girl,* was produced with a cast of children: Miss Duthé was the Merry Girl, Thomas Sully as the Master of an Inn, Chester Sully and an anonymous "young master" as the two Woodcutters, and Louis Duport as a Peddler.[18] This was one of Duport's few opportunities to play a dramatic role. On August 11, however, he joined the choreographer, Francisquy, in a Sailors' Dance in the "historic pantomime" *Genevieve of Brabant.*[19] (Gene Kelly was not the first star to realize the appealing contrast of an adult and a youngster dancing together.)

In the autumn of 1794, the French dancers left the Church Street Theatre to join the stock company of the larger Charleston Theatre, managed by Thomas Wade West and Mrs. Bignall, widow of the previous manager, who had died in August. Master Duport danced his "Fandango, with variations" in the pantomime *Don Juan,*

14. Eola Willis, *The Charleston Stage in the XVIII Century* (Charleston, 1924), pp. 187-192.
15. *South Carolina State Gazette,* July 16, 1794.
16. Ibid., July 23, 1794.
17. Ibid., July 30, 1794.
18. Ibid., Aug. 8, 1794.
19. Ibid., Aug. 11, 1794.

Eighteenth-century dancer. Painting by Jean-Frédéric Schall

on October 10. On the following evening the "Pastoral Pantomime Ballet" *The Whims of Galatea* entered the repertoire. Undoubtedly based on Noverre's famous work, *Les Caprices de Galathée,* it was advertised as "never performed in America." The cast was as follows:

> THE WHIMS OF GALATEA, or, THE POWER OF LOVE
> Hillas (a Shepherd, lover of Galatea), Mons. Francisqui
> Shepherds, Messrs. Placide, Spinacuta, Douvillier and Duport.
> and Alexis (a Shepherd) Mons. Fayol being his first appearance in Charleston.
> Silvia, Madame Val
> Shepherdesses, Miss West, Mrs. Doctor and Miss Duthé.
> and Galatea, Madame Placide.
> Pas Seul, by Fayol; Pas de Deux, Francisqui, Mme. Placide; Pas Seul, Duport.
> The whole to conclude with La Contre Danse de Cythère dans le Jardin d'amour.[20]

The "Fayol" who was making his debut was Peter Fayolle, a refugee from Santo Domingo who had recently arrived in Charles-

20. Ibid., Oct. 11, 1794.

ton with his wife and brothers.[21] Although his professional career was brief and undistinguished, he was to spend the rest of his life teaching dancing in Charleston, first in partnership with Francisquy, and later with his son Theodore Beloni Fayolle. Peter Fayolle died in Charleston in 1837, at the age of sixty-nine.[22]

The Charleston Theatre was one of the finest in the country. Opened in 1793, it was a truly imposing structure, 125 feet in length, 56 feet wide and 37 feet high. A flight of steps led up to the main entrance, between handsome pillars, on Broad Street. There were three tiers of boxes, divided by thirty-two columns, and for each column, a glass chandelier with five candles. The interior was decorated in white and silver. The balconies and stage doors were patterned after those of the King's Theatre, London. The stage was 56 feet deep, with a circular apron.[23] It was equipped for elaborate scenic and mechanical effects (such as can still be seen in operation in the eighteenth-century theatre at Drottningholm, Sweden).

The ballet company certainly attempted to live up to its elegant surroundings. It lacked nothing in courage, for it was not afraid to tackle the works of Noverre and Gardel. If the choreographers had a limited number of skilled ballet soloists (Duport, Fayolle, Francisquy, Placide, Spinacuta and Val among the men; Miss Duthé, Mme. Placide and Mme. Val among the women), they were able to draw at will from the able and experienced corps of actors and singers in casting mime roles, and such a versatile star as Louis Douvillier, for example, seems to have been nearly as proficient in pantomime as in his own field, light opera. Including the actors who "doubled" in the dance productions, no less than twelve women and thirty-two men played dance roles important enough to be listed in the newspaper advertisements, during the season of 1794-95.

During this long season, thirty-four different ballets and pantomimes were produced in addition to the usual plays, operas, and farces. A performance of *The Beggar's Opera,* December 26, 1794, featured "a Dance of Prisoners, in which will be introduced A PAS DE TROIS, by Mr. Fayol, Mr. Spinacuta and Mr. Duport, A PAS

21. Ibid., Oct. 20, 1794.
22. *Record of Wills,* Vol. 41, Book B (1834-39), p. 608, at the Charleston Free Library.
23. *New York Magazine,* Sept. 1792, quoted by Willis, *Charleston Stage,* p. 153.

SEUL, by Mr. Francisquy, IN CHAINS. . . ."[24] When *The American Heroine,* a pantomime based on the opera *Inkle and Yarico,* was presented for Mme. Placide's benefit on March 16, 1795, much was made of "a Grand Dance called La CHACONNE DE PUNCHINELLO, Dressed in character, by Master Duport."[25]

Most of the thirty ballets and pantomimes can be traced back to French originals. Francisquy was responsible for staging the majority of them, including *The 14th July 1789, or, The Destruction of the Bastille*; *The Unfortunate Family, or, The Generous Huntsmen,* with music by Paisiello; *Cupid's Revenge, or, The Metamorphoses* (later titled *The Old Man Grown Young*) and *The Cooper, or, The Amorous Guardian.* He also directed *Le Déserteur Français,* probably based on Gardel's *Le Déserteur,* which had its premiere at the Paris Opéra in 1788. The first Charleston performance (which was also the American premiere) took place on December 12, 1794, with Francisquy as Alexis, the Deserter, and Mme. Placide as Louisa. The new scenery and decorations were by Joseph Belzons. Louis Duport danced a *Pas de Deux* with Mlle. Duthé.[26]

A completely new production by Francisquy was the "grand pantomime," *Sampson, or, The Treachery of Delila,* "performed for the first time on the stage" on April 30, 1795, with magnificent new scenery by Audin. Jean Baptiste Val and Mme. Placide had the leading roles, with Francisquy as (of all things!) Harlequin, the slave of Accal. Louis Duport did not appear in *Sampson,* although he danced a Minuet with Miss Duthé and participated in a "Grand Ballet Dance" (a *Pas de Six*) between the play and pantomime at the same performance.[27]

Alexandre Placide was responsible for a number of productions, including *La Forêt Noire* and an especially elaborate pantomime called *Jupiter and Juno.* The scenery, by Audin, was extremely complicated, and Placide advertised that the quick changes of scene had been rehearsed as thoroughly as the action. He added: "The last scene of the pantomime representing Olympus in all its lustre and the palace of the sun, descending from the top of the stage, is taken from the same design as that at the opera house at Paris, as is likewise the bull, the carr [sic] of Juno drawn by peacocks and other

24. *South Carolina State Gazette,* Dec. 26, 1794.
25. Ibid., March 16, 1795.
26. Ibid., Dec. 12, 1794.
27. Ibid., April 30, 1795.

decorations which are too tedious to mention, but the public may depend that it is the most beautiful and grand Pantomime that ever was exhibited on the continent of America."[28] Francisquy staged the incidental dances and played Agenor, King of Phoenicia, Louis Douvillier was Jupiter, and Mme. Placide was Juno. Louis Duport joined Placide and Spinacuta in a dance of three Furies.

A detailed synopsis of the pantomime was published in the *South Carolina State Gazette* on March 27, 1795, the day of the first performance. It describes the entrance of Juno, pursuing her faithless husband, in her chariot drawn by peacocks. Then, "Three furies, armed with burning torches and serpents, excite her to jealousy. . . ." This dance must have been spectacular, for the torches doubtless burned with real flames, on a stage already lit by flickering candles.

The ballet *The Rose Bush of Salency,* based on Noverre's *La Rosière de Salency,* was presented on July 7, 1795. Suzanne Placide and Francisquy danced the leading roles, and there was a long divertissement in which all the principal dancers appeared, with Master Duport in a *Pas Seul.*[29]

In the first Charleston performance of Grétry's opera *La Caravane du Caire,* on August 3, 1795, Louis Duport supplied "a dance in character."[30] By coincidence, nine years later at the Paris Opéra, Louis Antoine Duport made such a sensational success of his solo in *La Caravane du Caire* that the opera was sometimes scheduled for the express purpose of featuring this dance.[31] Since *La Caravane* was standard opera repertoire, however, it cannot be claimed that this was anything more than an odd coincidence.

In the autumn of 1795 the Charleston dancers and actors went to Richmond, Virginia, for a season which lasted from September 10 until New Year's Eve. Louis Duport went along and became a popular box-office attraction in Richmond, as in Charleston. Dancing

28. Ibid., March 26, 1795.
29. *Charleston City Gazette,* July 7, 1795.
30. Oscar G. T. Sonneck, *Early Opera in America* (New York, 1915), pp. 209-210.
31. Letter from Bonet, Director of the Paris Opéra, to Lucay, Prefect of the Palace, June 13, 1804: ". . . I had to count on [Duport] for Friday. Consequently, I put in the repertoire for that day. . . . La Caravane, in which he has given so much pleasure. . . ." (Archives Nationales, Paris, Dossier AJ[13] 81.)

played an important part in every program, and at least one Virginian found the productions too frivolous for his taste. In a letter signed "Thespis," published in the *Richmond and Manchester Advertiser,* November 7, 1795, he complained that "The pieces selected for representation have been generally destitute of humour or of moral sentiment, and are merely calculated to seduce the public mind by the fascinating charm of theatrical entertainment. . . ." (This sort of protest probably had the same sort of effect as book-banning in Boston.)

For the final Richmond performance, on December 31, Francisquy staged a "Grand Masquerade *à la mode de Paris*" for the first act of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet,* ignoring the fact that something *à la mode de Verona* might have been more appropriate. The divertissement included a Minuet by Francisquy and Mme. Placide, an *Allemande à trois* by Francisquy with Mmes. Placide and Val, and a "Pas Seul, in the Character of a Shepherd," by Master Duport.[32] Although he was approaching fifteen, he was still billed as *Master,* an indication that he was probably small in stature.

When the company returned to Charleston, it was without its principal choreographer, Francisquy, who had gone north to New York with two of the leading dancers, M. and Mme. Val. Master Duport remained faithful to Alexandre Placide, who, after all, had brought him to Charleston.

The new season at the Charleston Theatre opened on February 15, 1796, with the play *Venice Preserved,* the ballet *The Bird Catcher,* with Duport as the first of the Hunters and Alexandre Placide in the title role, a farce called *The Sultan,* with an interpolated ballet divertissement, and Duport in a Hornpipe between the acts.[33] In *The Brother Quakers,* the following night, Duport inherited

32. *Richmond and Manchester Advertiser,* Dec. 30, 1795.
33. *South Carolina State Gazette,* Feb. 15, 1796.

Eighteenth-century rope-dancer. Anonymous Dutch etching (Prints Division, New York Public Library)

Francisquy's role of the Statuary-Man.[34] On February 26, Placide danced on the tight-rope with Duport on his shoulders—another indication that the boy was small and light.[35] Later in the season, Master Duport danced on the tight-rope himself, once or twice, but apparently his heart was not in it, for he soon returned to the ballet and character dances in which he excelled. He seemed especially partial to the *Fandango,* probably the same *Folies d'Espagne* in which he had made his Charleston debut.[36] He hardly ever played the violin any more.

On April 13, the entire company joined in a *"New COUNTRY DANCE, called YANKEY DOODLE"* to conclude the ballet *The Cooper.*[37] Without Francisquy to produce them, there were not many new ballets and pantomimes. A few were given, however: *Joan of Arc,* with Mme. Placide as the Maid of Orleans, on April 11, *Richard the First, or, The Perfidious Duke,* April 18, and the "new French Ballet," *Vauxhall Gardens,* on May 2. A new dancer, Mr.

34. Ibid., Feb. 16, 1796.
35. Ibid., Feb. 26, 1796.
36. Ibid., April 1 and April 13, 1796.
37. Ibid., April 13, 1796.

Miller, had joined the company and taken over Francisquy's role as one of the three Furies in *Jupiter and Europa.* Poor Miller had only a few months to live. He died on shipboard, en route to an engagement in Savannah, that same August.[38]

Suzanne Vaillande, the seventeen-year-old prima ballerina still known as "Mme. Placide," made her debut as a choreographer on May 9, when, for her own benefit preformance, she staged the "New Pastoral and Speaking Pantomime," in three acts, *Echo and Narcissus, or, The Levée of Cupid.* In the light of what followed, it is significant that she cast Louis Douvillier to play opposite her in the role of Narcissus. Louis Duport was Thyrsis, a Shepherd. Placide, Latté and James West were Furies, Mrs. James West, Miss West, and Miss Duthé were the Three Graces. Cupid was played by "a Young Master of this City" who joined Mme. Placide, Miss Duthé, and Duport in the dances which concluded the piece.[39]

The Charleston Theatre closed on June 1. Many members of the company (including Louis Duport) returned to the City Theatre in Church Street, where the French dancers had originally appeared in 1794, for a short season from June 28 to July 12. Director of this enterprise was James Verling Godwin, a veteran performer, who had been popular in Charleston many years earlier.

Godwin had appeared on the American stage as early as 1766, when he had danced and played minor roles at the Southwark Theatre, Philadelphia. In the spring of 1768, he had been a member of the Virginia Company of Comedians at Williamsburg, where he produced such ballets and pantomimes as *The Bedlamites, The Coopers* and *Harlequin Skeleton.*[40] For some years he was active in the theatre in Jamaica, in the West Indies, returning to the United States in 1779. Godwin was instrumental in opening a new theatre in Savannah in 1785, and in the following year he built Harmony Hall, Charleston's first post-Revolutionary theatre. His dancing was so popular that on one occasion the audience rioted when a dance which had been advertised ("comic dance called The Drunken Peasant

38. "Died . . . on board the sloop Dove, performing quarantine at Cockspur . . . Miller, the latter late of the Charleston Theatre." (*Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser,* Aug. 16, 1796.)
39. Willis, *Charleston Stage,* p. 324.
40. George O. Seilhamer, *History of the American Theatre* (Philadelphia, 1888), I, 203, 236-238.

with an Italian hornpipe by Mr. Godwin") was not forthcoming.[41] Not very successful as a theatrical manager, Godwin supplemented his income by teaching dancing, wherever he happened to be.

Godwin's first performance at the City Theatre, June 28, 1796, was given for the benefit of the sufferers from a fire which had recently ravaged the city. Louis Duport played his first speaking part. It was Sattin. in Henry Fielding's comedy *The Miser,* and a very brief part indeed, comprising exactly two lines. More important was the *Pas Seul* he danced in the pantomime *The Two Thieves,* directed by Placide.[42] On July 9, Duport played his first role in comic opera, Lewis in Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The Duenna.*[43]

Godwin's season closed on July 12, with the opera *Inkle and Yarico* and Placide's ballet *The French Vauxhall Gardens.* This performance marked Louis Duport's last appearance in Charleston. It was also the last time Suzanne Vaillande was to use the name of Mme. Placide. A lurid private drama was being played behind the scenes. It was to lead to a duel, two marriages, and the foundation of a dynasty of American actors. Indirectly, this complicated scandal may have caused the disappearance, or perhaps the death, of the "American" Louis Duport.

41. Willis, op. cit., p. 121.
42. Ibid., p. 334
43. *Columbian Herald, or New Daily Advertiser* (Charleston, S.C.), July 7, 1796.

THE PLACIDE-DOUVILLIER DUEL

When Louis Douvillier arrived in the United States early in 1793, he was accompanied by his wife, an accomplished opera singer. In Boston, Newport and Charleston, she sang leading roles in such works as Grétry's *Zémire et Azor,* Monsigny's *Le Déserteur,* and Dezède's *Alexis et Justine.* She made frequent concert appearances and occasionally sang an aria between the play and the ballet. She was known only as Mme. Douvillier, and neither her Christian nor her maiden name has yet been discovered.

Louis Douvillier and his wife did not appear in Richmond with the Charleston company in the autumn of 1795. When the troupe reopened in Charleston, early in 1796, Mme. Douvillier's name no longer appeared on the bills. Very probably, she had died. (Her husband might have remained in Charleston to nurse his ailing wife, while his colleagues were on tour.) At any rate, Mme. Douvillier, the singer, vanished from the stage.

Louis Douvillier, on the other hand, continued to play leading parts in operas and plays, while in the absence of both Francisquy and Val, he assumed roles of greater importance than he had previously undertaken in the ballet and pantomimes. Thus he was thrown into close daily contact with the charming Suzanne Vaillande, "Madame" Placide. A tall, handsome man with wavy black hair—the description has been passed down to his direct descendants[1]—he was thirty-three, nearly twice the age of Suzanne, but eleven years younger than Alexandre Placide.

While his supposed wife was flirting with the personable singer, Alexander Placide had found another young lady to comfort him. Or perhaps Douvillier was comforting Suzanne for the defection of

1. Information from Miss Alice M. Wyss of New Orleans, the great-great granddaughter of Louis Douvillier.

her "husband." At a distance of nearly two centuries, it is difficult to tell.

During the winter of 1795-96 the stock company at the City (Church Street) Theatre had enjoyed the services of the brilliant singer and actress, Mrs. Mary Ann Pownall, and her two daughters by an earlier marriage, Charlotte and Mary Wrighten. Mrs. Pownall was a truly distinguished artist, having made her debut in Garrick's company at Drury Lane and played opposite John Philip Kemble. Charlotte and Mary were talented girls, new to the stage, for although they had sung in concerts with their mother in Boston, they both made their theatrical debuts in Charleston. Charlotte, in particular, was unusually gifted, and only two months after the season opened she was playing Ophelia in *Hamlet.* Since the Charleston and City Theatres usually played on alternate evenings, Alexandre Placide may have seen her in it. Godwin's summer season brought the Placides, the Wrightens, Mrs. Pownall, Douvillier and Louis Duport all together on the same stage.

Things soon came to a head. Placide challenged Douvillier to a duel, charging the alienation of the affections of his "wife." Several accounts of this duel, all written some years after the event, have survived. Perhaps the most accurate is that found in Charles William Janson's *The Stranger in America,* published in London in 1807.

> Another memorable duel took place in Charleston during my residence in America, between two "stage-struck heroes"; the subject—all subduing love! The theatrical duellists were Placide, the manager of the Charleston company, who formerly was a tight-rope dancer at Sadler's Wells, and one of his troupe, named Douvillier, a ballet dancer. The manager kept a lady of whom the performer was also enamoured; on which the "green-eyed monster" took possession of the breast of Placide. . . . A challenge was given by the aggrieved party, and both being expert swordsmen, in fact, acting occasionally as fencing masters, it was determined by Placide to wipe out his disgrace by the sword. A place was appointed, and the next day, *at noon,* fixed for the combat. Before the time arrived, half of Charleston were apprised of the circumstances, and the combatants went to the ground, attended by multitudes to witness the event. The attack was begun by Placide, who furiously rushed upon his antagonist, determined to put him to death in an instant. I learned from those who were present, that the science displayed by Douvillier in defending himself from this imminent danger, added to his coolness and activity,

Duel. *New York Evening Post,* October 15, 1808

interested the spectators for the moment, though he was known to be the offender. Having parried the deadly thrust, and sustained the shock of the onset, he maintained his ground, and the science of fencing was, in good earnest, displayed for some minutes, without intermission, till Placide was disarmed. He affected now to smother the disappointment of revenge, and to hide his chagrin, until suddenly springing upon his antagonist, he recovered his sword, and before the other could put himself on his guard, he was run through the body. There was said to be something of foul play in this; however, Placide returned to his lodgings in triumph, and immediately turned the frail fair one into the street, from whence she proceeded to her vanquished lover, whose wound she dressed, and who recovered to live many years with her for whom he had fought. . . .[2]

A second account, given by Charles Durang (who probably heard the story from his father, John Durang, who knew the participants personally) is full of vivid detail:

Placide, then manager of the Charleston theatre, and Douvilliers [sic] (who was a most expert swordsman), had a desperate encounter in the streets of Charleston, near St. Michael's church. . . . Extraordinary as this encounter was in an American town, yet Charleston was then so Frenchified by the great influx of emigrants that this affray created nothing more than ordinary excitement to witness the combat. When they . . . came upon instant guard, we are told by a gentleman who saw it, they presented a perfect picture of a picturesque combat. Both were expert fencers; Douvilliers,

2. *The Stranger in America, 1793-1806,* ed. Carl S. Driver (New York, 1935), pp. 369-370. (Reprinted from 1807 edition.)

however, was the best. Both possessed manly and graceful figures, and dexterity and elegance of action. They glared at each other, with swords crossed, with the greatest animosity. Douvilliers was dressed all in white, and wore a straw hat, while Placide, with only trousers and a shirt on, which was open at the bosom, and his sleeves rolled up, showed a fine, brawny frame, meanwhile eyeing his antagonist with the expression of a hawk. The attitudes of these combatants, for grace, would . . . have done honor to the imagination and execution of a Vernet. The pause lasted some time, when Douvilliers made the first lunge in tierce, and was skillfully parried by Placide. A rally ensued, and Placide retreated, parrying the rapid thrusts of his expert adversary. Thus retreating, he fell over a stone which was behind him; and, as he fell, and when of course off guard, Douvilliers pierced him in the right thigh with his weapon. The crowd cried "Shame!" At that moment Placide sprang to his feet, and being a very active and strong man, thrust with the rapidity of lightning at Douvilliers, who, in his turn, acted on the defensive, for all his skill and coolness were rather shaken by Placide's renewed attack, when he thought he had thrown him *hors de combat*. Placide, by mere vigor, although losing blood fast, beat down Douvilliers' guard, and succeeded in wounding his opponent in his sword-arm. The crowd then separated them; and as the sympathies of the people were with Placide, they took him up in their arms, and with general shouts bore him to his house in the Vauxhall Gardens, near the theatre. . . .[3]

An even more colorful but largely erroneous account, clipped from a newspaper (apparently a Charleston paper of the 1850's) is to be found in a scrapbook in the Theatre Collection of The New York Public Library:

Placide's first wife—an eminently beautiful French lady—danced on the tight-rope. . . . The beauty of Mrs. Placide won her many admirers, and one among them—dazzled, if not distracted by her charm—ventured so far for a return of passion that Placide challenged him. They fought near Charleston, the weapons being cross-swords; both were adepts, and both men of courage. The lover, a Frenchman, was anxious to kill the husband; and the husband was desirous of punishing the lover, as a warning to the gallantry of the age. In parrying a thrust the lover stepped back, and, his heel coming against a stump, he fell backward, and in his fall received a mortal wound from his antagonist. His opponent and

3. *History of the Philadelphia Stage,* I, 66-67. (Never published in book form, this work was printed serially in a newspaper. The clippings are contained in scrapbooks in the University of Pennsylvania Library.)

the seconds endeavored to render every aid they could to the wounded man; and to show to what extent the enthusiasm of love will carry a Frenchman, while he lay on the ground, the blood flowing freely from his gaping wound and the life ebbing fast, he espied in the hands of Placide, who was leaning over him, a handkerchief belonging to the latter's wife, with her initials in the corner. Madly snatching it, he applied it with ecstasy to his wound, staunching the blood, uttering all the while frenzied exclamations of joy and adoration. In this dramatic manner he died. The affair created quite a sensation at the time.[4]

Excruciatingly touching as it is, this account is obviously exaggerated, since Douvillier lived not only to enjoy Suzanne's company, but to marry her. According to Eola Willis, their wedding took

4. Scrapbook of Henry Cotton, p. 138. Still another account of the Placide-Douvillier duel, fantastically garbled and incorrect in almost every detail, is given in Noah Ludlow, *Dramatic Life as I Found It* (St. Louis, 1880), pp. 148-149.

St. Michael's Alley, Charleston (Photograph by Lillian Moore)

place on June 30, 1796, in Charleston.[5] No further record of it has been located, but marry they certatinly did, for the death record of Louis Douvillier at St. Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, states that he was the "husband of Susanne Vayande" [sic].[6] The record of her death, five years after her husband's, describes her as "widow of Don Louis Douvillier."[7] Futhermore, the identity of Suzanne Douvillier with "Madame" Placide is confirmed by a notice in the Norfolk, Virginia, *Herald,* where they repaired as soon as Douvillier was well enough to travel. The issue of September 26, 1796, carries an advertisement of the "French Ballet Pantomime" *The Generous Soldier and the Two Thieves,* with Douvillier as the Soldier and, as Collet, *"Madame Douvillier, late Madame Placide,* being her first appearance on this stage."

Alexandre Placide lost no time in consoling himself for Suzanne's defection. His wounded sensibilities were quickly soothed by his marriage, on August 1, to Charlotte Sophia Wrighten. This strange union, between a forty-six-year-old reprobate and a very young girl, was to prove a durable, happy and fruitful one, producing a whole dynasty of first-rate actors, led by their sons Henry and Thomas Placide.

The elopement, however, brought immediate tragedy to Charlotte's family. Mrs. Pownall, prostrated with grief over her daughter's marriage to a man whom she considered a worthless mountebank, suffered still another cruel shock in the death of her four-year-old son, Felix Pownall, on August 9. Three days later, she herself succumbed. On August 24 Charlotte's sister, Mary Wrighten, literally died of a broken heart. Mrs. Pownall, Mary and little Felix are all buried in St. Philip's churchyard, Charleston.

Eola Willis says that Placide and his bride had left Charleston for a honeymoon in Augusta, Georgia, immediately after the wedding, and did not learn of the three deaths until their return a month

5. At the time of her death, Eola Willis left to the Charleston Free Library an unfinished manuscript history of the Placide family. This manuscript is the source of the date given for the marriage of Louis Douvillier and Suzanne Vaillande. Miss Willis gives no sources for any of the statements in this manuscript, and a careful search of those church records which are still extant in Charleston and Norfolk has failed to reveal anything to substantiate her statement. She must, however, have had some authority for giving this particular date.
6. The entry states that he died on July 20, 1821, aged about 60 years.
7. The entry in the Records of St. Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, states that "Dama Suzanne Theodora Vaillande, Vve. de feu Louis Douvillier français," died on Aug. 30, 1826, aged 48.

later.[8] At the tragic news, Placide himself nearly suffered a stroke. Of the family which had arrived in Charleston the previous autumn, only Hugh Pownall, the actress's husband, and a baby daughter who had been born after their arrival, remained. They, too, sadly left Charleston in late September.

The later lives and careers of Suzanne and Louis Douvillier and Charlotte and Alexandre Placide were so eventful that whole books could be written about them. However, their personal involvements were important to Louis Duport because they led to the collapse of the Charleston company as he had known it.

Under the circumstances, there was no thought of performing in Charleston. Nevertheless, dancers and actors must live. Probably at the suggestion of Godwin, who was returning to Savannah, a small group of performers decided to go there and try their luck with a series of concerts. They probably travelled by ship, on the sloop *Dove,* for their colleague Mr. Miller was on board, though he died before they reached Savannah on August 17.

The little troupe could not afford to indulge in the luxury of mourning, so next day it advertised its first performance, to take place the following evening, August 19, at the Assembly Room. The artists were James West and his wife, singers; Mr. Sully (probably Matthew Sully, Jr.) who sang "America, Commerce and Freedom" and other selections; two musicians, Messrs. Daguetty and Brunette, and Master Duport.

At this, his last performance of which we have a positive record, the "American" Louis Duport danced a Hornpipe and a French dance (probably a classical *pas*), played a concerto on the violin, and joined Daguetty and Brunette in playing *La Fille à Simonette,* an air with variations composed by Daguetty for two violins and bassoon.[9]

Further concerts were announced, but since no programs were listed, it is impossible to know whether or not Duport participated. James V. Godwin and Mrs. Decker "who have just arrived" scheduled a concert for September 8, but postponed it until the 10th. Another Grand Concert was advertised for September 15, and the

8. Willis Ms., Charleston Free Library.
9. *Georgia Gazette* (Savannah), Aug. 18, 1796.

"last Grand Concert" for September 22.[10] Very probably, Duport appeared in all of these performances.

Later in the autumn of 1796, a company of actors and dancers, drawn largely from the Charleston company of the preceding season, were appearing in Norfolk. Mrs. Gray was there, and the West family, Mr. and Mrs. James West apparently having come directly from Savannah to join the rest of their tribe. The brightest stars were Louis Douvillièr and "Madame Douvillier, late Madame Placide." Did Louis Duport plan to rejoin Suzanne, his former partner, in this company? Did he leave Savannah with the Wests?

One faint clue indicates that perhaps this was at least his intention. Listed among the letters lying unclaimed at the Norfolk Post Office during the month of September 1796, was one addressed to "Monsieur Duporte."[11]

Except for that (and the letter may have been meant for quite a different Duport) not another trace of the "American" Duport has been unearthed. After Savannah, he simply vanished.[12] He was not yet sixteen.

10. Ibid., Sept. 6, Sept. 9, Sept. 13 and Sept. 22, 1796.
11. *American Gazette and General Advertiser* (Norfolk, Va.), Sept. 2, Sept. 13 and Sept. 20, 1796.
12. In the effort to solve the disappearance of Louis Duport, available death records in Boston, New Orleans and Norfolk, as well as in Charleston and Savannah, have been searched without result. "Master Duport" was certainly famous enough for his untimely death—if it occurred in 1796—to have been mentioned in the *Columbian Centinel* of Boston, which faithfully reported the marriages and deaths of prominent theatrical personalities. It was not recorded there.

THE LITTLE BALLERINA

If Pierre Landrin Duport was distressed when Louis left home to dance in Placide's company in the autumn of 1793, he certainly did not mope about it. Instead, he set to work to groom his little daughter Anna to appear as principal soloist at his concerts and balls. Anna, then about seven or eight years old, may even have been the "young lady" who danced a solo in the "Display of Dancing" presented by her father in Boston on September 11, 1793, the last time Master Louis Duport appeared under his auspices. At any rate, she was certainly performing by 1794, for the *Columbian Centinel* of September 7, 1796, called attention to the fact that she had "not performed in public for two years past. . . ."

Throughout the winter, P. L. Duport taught diligently at Mr. Dearborn's school in Milk Street. When he advertised his spring Ball, to be given at Franklin's Hall on April 10, 1794, the attractions announced included a *Minuet de la Cour,* a *Gavotte,* a Fancy Solo, a "Rondeau Dance, by a young pupil, in a fancy dress," and "a plain Minuet and a fancy Dance, by pupils only 6 years old."[1]

The "young pupil, in a fancy dress," may well have been Anna, although she was not mentioned in the account of the display which appeared in the *Columbian Centinel* on April 12: "The admirers of the 'mazy dance' were on Thursday evening gratified with an elegant exhibition at Mr. Duport's ball. Without detracting from the merits of other professors, it can with truth be said, that the proficiency made by the scholars of this gentleman, surpass anything the citizens of Boston have before witnessed—If evidence were needed, the little prattlers who appeared as having just escaped from leading strings, accurately tracing every winding of the 'regular confusion'

1. *Columbian Centinel,* April 9, 1794.

Federal Street Theatre, Boston (Harvard Theatre Collection)

would be amply sufficient. The friends of the polite accomplishment must most heartily wish Mr. Duport success."

In the meantime, a splendid new theatre had been erected in Federal Street. Designed by Charles Bullfinch, it was of elegant Georgian design, and had cost about $40,000. In addition to the theatre proper, which had two tiers of boxes and seated 1,060 persons, the building had an Assembly Room 58 feet long and 36 feet wide, elaborately decorated, with gilded and carved mouldings and medallions, and exquisite chandeliers and girandoles imported from England.[2] On the ground floor at the south-east corner was a simpler "Long Room," which Pierre Landrin Duport promptly rented for his dancing classes. From his contract with the trustees of the theatre, we know that he paid £60 a year rental. This included the use of the Assembly Room once a fortnight for a ball or special practice sessions, provided that he had the room cleaned on the following morning and replaced any broken furniture or glassware at his own expense.[3]

2. Most of the data about the Federal Street Theatre is taken from John Alden's monograph *A Season in Federal Street,* reprinted from *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* (Worcester, Mass.), April 1955.
3. Manuscript contract between P. L. Duport and the trustees of the Boston (Federal Street) Theatre, dated Nov. 12, 1794. (Rare Book Collection, Boston Public Library.)

"The amateurs of the 'mazy dance' were highly gratified on Tuesday evening, by the exhibitions, at the New Theatre Hall, of the scholars of Mr. DUPORT," commented the *Columbian Centinel* on November 15. "The gace, ease, and correspondence of the pupils evince, not only the skill of the perfect Master, but his unwearied assiduity and attention."

P. L. Duport taught in the Long Room of the Federal Street Theatre for a year and a half, and then acquired a new house and a separate studio of his own, in Rowe's Lane. This was a fairly large establishment, in its own good-sized lot. Duport rented it from one Thomas Thompson. It included a "wooden dwelling, South on Pond Street, North and West on Row, East on Russell; a school room (the dancing studio), 1,260 square feet; wood. Land, 6,480 sq. ft.; house, 606 sq. feet, 2 stories, 23 windows, value, $2,800."[4]

Apparently the acquisition of these premises caused Duport some financial embarrassment, for shortly after opening the new studio he added a line to his usual advertisement in the *Columbian Centinel* of January 30, 1796: "Mr. DUPORT wishes those Gentlemen who have not settled for the last quarter, will call on him: as from the great expence of his Hall he finds himself much necessitated for a present supply of Cash."

Settled in his new quarters, Duport began rehearsing his students in a ballet, *The Village Feast*. This was the principal feature of his next ball, presented at the New Theatre Hall, Federal Street, on March 3, 1796.[5] On May 5, at his own studio, he gave a ballet called *The May*, ". . . (twice presented by him to an admiring and respectable audience) dedicated to the first fruits of May . . . The cheering influence of Spring—the propriety of the exhibition in such a season—and the style in which the whole is to be executed, will, it is fondly hoped, induce a full and cheerful audience."[6] Tickets were $1.00 each, and included both the performance and the ball which followed.

Apparently *The May* had been produced during Duport's first season in Boston, for his manuscript notebook contains a "franch [sic] Contre-Dance—call Convention/belong to the May at Boston 1794."[7] A "Grand Jig—for a Ballet at Boston 1796," in the same

4. *A Report of the Record Commissioners of the City of Boston. U.S. Tax of 1798, and National Census of 1790 for Boston,* p. 389.
5. *Columbian Centinel,* Feb. 24, 1796.
6. Ibid., April 27, 1796.
7. *Mss. Dance Tunes,* N. 15.

notebook[8] may have been used in either *The May* or *The Village Feast*. These ballets were probably based on French originals.[9]

In the autumn of 1796, little Anna Duport, "who has not performed in public for two years past," danced at her father's ball "in two different characters, the Serious and Comic, in a NEW CADRIEL, composed for the occasion, by Mr. Duport."[10] The young ballerina (she was about twelve) further demonstrated her versatility by dancing a hornpipe. An anonymous "Correspondent, who attended the exhibition of Mr. DUPORT'S scholars, on Thursday evening," wrote in a letter to the *Columbian Centinel* on October 1, that he could not "refrain from expressing the pleasure he received from the correct and beautiful display of their performances."

That autumn, Duport had been obliged to postpone the opening of his classes for several weeks because too few pupils had registered. He may have suffered from the competition offered by two formidable rivals, Jean Baptiste Francisquy (the choreographer under whom Louis Duport had danced in Charleston in 1794-95) and Jean Marie Legé, a comparative newcomer to the American scene, who had arrived in Boston early in September to head the ballet at another new theatre, the Haymarket. Its opening was postponed until December, and in the meantime the two performers opened a dancing school at Bowen's Hall, under the Columbian Museum, advertising that ". . . the principals of their mode of instruction are founded upon reflection and long professional experience. . . ."[11] Although their terms were extravagantly high ($12 per quarter, for three lessons a week, in comparison with the $8 per quarter charged by P. L. Duport and other Boston teachers) they may have made substantial inroads on his quota of pupils.

The Haymarket Theatre opened on December 26, 1796. A huge wooden structure, taller than any other building in Boston, it

8. Ibid., N. 19.
9. A one-act ballet-pantomime by Dorvigny, *La Fête du Village,* had been given at the Théâtre des Variétés Amusantes, Paris, in 1779. (Louis-Henry Lecomte, *Histoire des Théâtres de Paris,* VII: *Les Variétés Amusantes* [Paris, 1908], p. 25.) The same theatre, in 1781, had presented *Le Mai,* another one-act ballet-pantomime. (Ibid., p. 61.) P. L. Duport could have seen them both, as well as the *Ballet du Mai et des Cerceaux,* which was given as the grand finale of a *Fête Flamande* at the Panthéon, Paris, in 1788, after Duport's return from Dublin. (*Journal de Paris,* Dec. 8, 1788.)
10. *Columbian Centinel,* Sept. 7, 1796.
11. Unidentified clipping, "Boston Theatre Scrapbook," I (Harvard Theatre Collection).

had three tiers of boxes, a gallery, a pit and a drawing room. In addition to a strong company of actors, it had an excellent *corps de ballet,* led by Francisquy (who was responsible for the choreography), M. and Mme. Francisquy, M. and Mme. Val, and M. and Mme. Sevens. The opening performance comprised *The Belle's Stratagem,* with a "Pastoral Ballet Dance" consisting of a *Pas de Deux* by Francisquy and Mme. Val, a *Pas de Six,* a *Pas Seul* by Francisquy and another by Legé, and the "grand Historical and Tragi-Heroic PANTOMIME in 3 acts, called *MIRZA AND LINDOR,*" staged by Francisquy.[12] Two days later, the ballet *The Cooper, or, The Amorous Guardian* was produced.

There was a certain amount of rivalry between the new Haymarket and the older Federal Street Theatre, and on December 31, 1796, the *Columbian Centinel* commented: "Both Theatres we are happy to hear, are well attended. There is much ability in both:— But the style of dancing and pantomime exhibitions in the large theatre [i.e., the Haymarket] must be allowed to be the most elegant ever seen by an American audience."

The Federal Street Theatre could not boast such an expert ballet company. It had one glamorous star in Mme. Anna Gardie, a beautiful and accomplished ballerina who was to meet a tragic fate two years later, when she was murdered by her husband. The secondary dance roles, however, were filled by such comparatively unskilled performers as Charlotte Rowson (primarily an actress), Mrs. Collins and Miss Green. Early in 1797, probably in an effort to strengthen its dance contingent and meet the Haymarket on its own ground, it engaged young Anna Duport.

Pierre Landrin Duport does not seem to have put much faith in theatrical managers, and generally preferred to work alone. Perhaps he was too independent and dictatorial to enjoy collaborating with anyone. (Louis Duport, while under his guardianship, had very seldom appeared in any performances not presented by him.) Nevertheless, he permitted Anna to make her debut at the Federal Street Theatre on January 2, 1797.

An advertisement which appeared in the *Independent Chronicle* on the preceding day announced, to follow Thompson's play *Tancred and Sigismunda*:

12. Ibid.

A FANCY DANCE
en demi-caractère,
and HORNPIPE
By a young lady of this Town (not ten years of age) being her first appearance on any stage.

(Apparently Duport had already begun minimizing his daughter's age, a manoeuvre he was to carry still farther a couple of years later, when she was still announced as ten.)

Although her debut was modestly anonymous, it did not pass unnoticed. A review which appeared in the *Massachusetts Mercury* next day said: "We cannot . . . omit to mention the exquisite dancing of a young female who, we have since understood, was Miss ANN DUPORT, daughter of a Dancing Master in this town, of that name. Not a step, not a motion, but summoned, the most complete thunder of applause."

On January 13, before her second appearance (when she was announced as "a young LADY, Pupil of Mr. DUPORT"), the same critic rhapsodized:

From *Singing and Dancing* by François Boucher (1703-1770) (Frick Collection, New York)

The *"demi-caractère* Dance" by Miss *Anne Duport,* contains more real entertainment for the amateur, than all the skipping, hopping, and jumping (commonly called *Dancing*) pantomimes, ever exhibited in this fastidious age of dramatic delirium. In all her attitudes and gestures, there is a soul and expression, which gives language to motion; and in her steps, a lightness and grace, like that of Shakespeare's elves,

Who on the sands, with printless foot
Do chace the ebbing Neptune.

For her third appearance, Anna had star billing. As a feature of the first Boston performance of Grétry's opera *Richard Coeur de Lion,* on January 23, the Federal Street Theatre announced:

A PASTORAL DANCE

Incidental to the piece, by Miss A. *DUPORT,* Miss SOLOMON, and Miss HOGG.—First Shepherdess, with a *Pas Seul,* by Miss DUPORT.[13]

Once her name was programmed, it was printed in letters larger than those given any other member of the cast. Nevertheless, she did not dance in *Richard Coeur de Lion.* On the afternoon of the performance, the *Independent Chroncile* carried the following succinct notice:

A CARD

Mr. Duport informs the Ladies and Gentlemen of Boston, that he declines permitting his Daughter's performing in future in the Boston theatre. Monday morning, jan. 23, 1797.[14]

The reason for the rupture between Duport and the manager of the Federal Street Theatre, J. B. Williamson, remains undiscovered. Duport's "Card" sounds rather high-handed. Had similar tactics on his part forced Louis to leave him in order to make further progress in his professional career?

In advertisements of later performances of *Richard Coeur de Lion* there was no further mention of the "Pastoral Dance," although Mme. Gardie danced between the opera and the play. Shortly after the defection of Duport and his daughter, Williamson succeeded in luring Jean Marie Legé, with several members of the *corps de ballet,*

13. *Columbian Centinel,* Jan. 23, 1797.
14. I am indebted to Mr. John Alden of the Boston Public Library for calling my attention to this announcement.

away from the Haymarket. Consequently he was able to announce that at the fourth performance of *Richard Coeur de Lion,* on February 15, "The Original Ballet Dance will be introduced by Mr. Legé, Madame Gardie, Miss Rowson, Mrs. Collins, Miss Green, Madam Legé, Mr. Dubois, Mr. Renaud and Mr. Rogers."[15]

In the meantime, Duport was hard at work on a new production of his own, and was trying to get his cast together. On the first of February he announced in the *Columbian Centinel*:

> NEW BALLET
>
> MR. DUPORT, begs leave to inform his former day scholars, that he has composed a new Ballet, called "The Nobles," which is intended for his last Ball this season—a particular description of which will be made known to them at his new Hall, at the meeting on Thursday next, at 12 o'clock, A.M.

The title of *The Nobles* recalls the solo which Louis Duport had danced in Philadelphia four years earlier, *Le Noble, or, Henry IV*. Whether or not *The Nobles* was ever actually presented we cannot say, as the newspapers seem to have carried no further mention of it.

Very few performers start making farewell appearances as early as Anna Duport. In May, there was a premature announcement of her retirement, when Duport advertised "an entirely new Ballet called *La Dance de Ville*—performed by twenty-two Masters and Misses . . . Other exhibitions will be introduced after the *Ballet,* and the Scholars Ball will conclude with a new Pas-seul, by Miss ANNA DUPORT, in the character of a *Shepherdess,* being her last public performance. . . ."[16] At another ball given by Duport on June 27, Anna danced a Hornpipe and the "Shepherdess" solo.[17]

Less than a year later, however, she was dancing at the Haymarket Theatre. The occasion was a special performance on April 25, 1798, for the benefit of an actor named Villiers, who was probably a friend of her father's. This seems to have been the only time Pierre Landrin Duport staged a work for an American theatre. It was the "Pantomimical Interlude, composed and got up under the direction of Mr. DUPORT, entitled THE DESCENT OF APOLLO. . . ."

15. "Boston Theatre Scrapbook," II.
16. *Columbian Centinel,* May 6, 1797.
17. *Massachusetts Mercury,* June 27, 1797.

Anna Duport. By an unknown painter.
Courtesy of Philip M. Copp

Anna's appearance was prominently advertised: "At the particular request of some respectable characters, Miss *Duport* will (for that night only) display her exquisite talents, in the character of *Apollo*. . . ." The music was by Grétry, but the cast of characters conveys the impression that the production must have been very much like a typical English pantomime, featuring fantastic transformation scenes, Harlequin's tricks, and a leading lady *en travesti*:

THE DESCENT OF APOLLO

Apollo (for that night only) Miss *Duport*
First Indian, a young Gentleman, pupil to Mr. D.
Second Indian, a young Gentleman.
Harlequin, a Gentleman of *Boston,* 1st and last time.

Indian Squaw Miss Solomon
The much admired TAMBOURINE DANCE, in the character of an Indian Chief, Mr. LEGE[18]

It is notable that Jean Marie Legé, the regular choreographer of the Haymarket, seems to have been quite willing to work under Duport's direction, and to accept second billing to Anna. The little ballerina earned high praise in the *Columbian Centinel* for May 2, 1798: "A Correspondent, who was at the Theatre on Wednesday Evening, was so truly enchanted with the unparalleled performance of Miss Duport, that he cannot in duty withold this public notice of her talents. There has been no Theatre exhibition of Dancing in this town, which, for science and elegance, could with any possible chance of competition, be compared to it. As Mr. Duport received no emolument from her appearance that evening, it is hoped that some other occasion may be embraced, in which the exertion of her astonishing powers may retribute to her paternal preceptor a due compensation for his indefatigable care and attention. . . ."

Probably Duport reaped his reward at the Ball for her benefit, which took place on June 5, at the studio in Rowe's Lane. Anna opened the ball "in the character of a Spanish Grandee" (was Duport reviving another of Louis' favorite solos, the *Folies d'Espagne*?). This was followed by a "Ballet Dance" by a group of pupils, boys and girls, concluding with "Miss Duport's exhibiting in the character of an ACADIAN NYMPH."[19]

In the autumn of 1798 Duport's advertisements, usually so clear and definite, took a confused and vacillating turn. First he announced that, although he had considered leaving Boston for good, he would continue to teach there and in Charlestown.[20] Next he suddenly declared that he would present, at his hall in Rowe's Lane, ". . . an Artic entertainment, consisting of an accitation [!], vocal, and instrumental Music . . . Several of the principal performers having offered their services. . . ."[21] But this strange concert was put off with a notice in the *Massachusetts Mercury* for October 26: "POSTPONEMENT. *Mr. L. Duport,* highly sensible of the Benevolence of his Friends in their wishes to render him assistance in the

18. "Boston Theatre Scrapbook," II.
19. *Columbian Centinel,* May 12, 1798.
20. Ibid., Oct. 10, 1798.
21. Ibid., Oct. 24, 1798.

moment of difficulty, renders them his sincerest acknowledgements, and informs them and the Public, that owning to the premature adoption of the proposed plan at too short a notice, he finds it out of his power to make the necessary arrangements for presenting the OLIO, promised for this evening."

The helpless tone of this message is far indeed from the calm, assured self-confidence that usually distinguished Duport's advertisements. What had caused his "moment of difficulty"? The dreaded yellow fever was raging in Boston that winter; had it attacked some member of his family? Anna had not been announced to dance; had she been ill? We can only guess at the answers to these questions.

A few days later Duport again advertised his classes in Charlestown; but something suddenly clinched his decision to leave New England. Before the end of the year he was back in New York. A Boston rival, C. Frazier, was soon announcing a ball "at the Hall lately improved by *Mr. Duport.*"[22]

Duport announced his presence in New York by giving a ball on January 8, 1799, at Hunter's Hotel, with Anna providing the entertainment. The notice gave the complete program, although it is not clear just who executed Nos. III and IV. Duport proclaimed:

> His daughter, a Child of only ten years old, will display the graces in several fancy dances, in the course of the evening, in two different characters—viz:
>
> I. The Acadian Nymph, with music and dress adapted, exhibited at Boston with unbounded applause.
>
> II. The admired French Dance of Richard Coeur de Leon and a Hornpipe.
>
> III. An English plain Minuet; also, De la Cour's Minuet and Gavotte.
>
> IV. The Montsetine.
>
> *Miss Duport's* first performance will be given precisely at 7 o'clock, and the Ladies and Gentlemen's Ball will open immediately after. . . .[23]

The Duports were living at No. 4 Wall Street; later that year, their address was 64 Maiden Lane.[24] Duport's dancing classes were held at Lovett's Hotel, 69 Broadway. When he rented the room, he

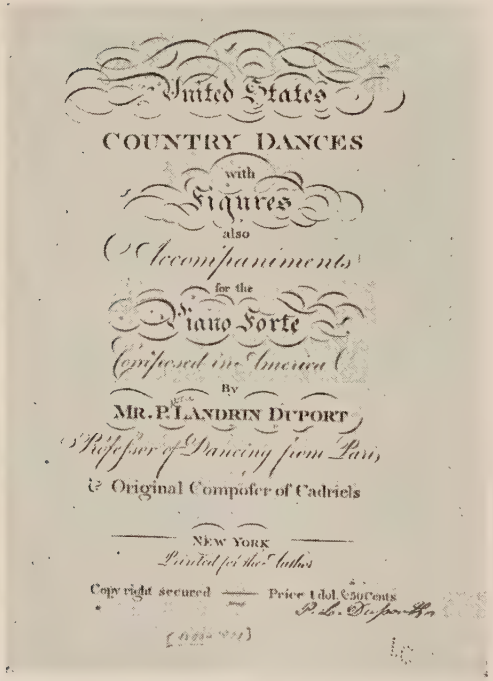
22. *Massachusetts Mercury,* Feb. 12, 1799.
23. *Daily Advertiser* (New York), Dec. 31, 1798 and Jan. 1, 1799.
24. Ibid., Nov. 14, 1799.

stipulated that no other dancing master should teach on the premises, to the considerable annoyance of a Mr. Bellevue who had formerly taught there, and was obliged to seek other quarters.[25]

During this stay in New York, which lasted until the spring of 1802, P. L. Duport published his best known collections of dances, the *United States Country Dances* and the *New Sett of Cotillions, with Figures, called The American Navy.* (See Appendix II.)

Duport produced no more ballets, although he exhibited his pupils in formal minuets, cotillions, and "cadriels." Anna danced infrequently, and only at her father's balls. The only new solo she added to her repertoire was a German waltz, danced on April 7, 1802, at what seems to have been her very last performance.[26] She was apparently dancing as well as ever that year, for an admirer wrote in an anonymous letter to the *New York Evening Post*: "I went last evening to Mr. Duport's *Public,* and I cannot refuse myself the

25. Ibid., Nov. 23, 1799.
26. *New York Evening Post,* March 18, 1802.


United States
COUNTRY DANCES
with
Figures
also
Accompaniments
for the
Piano Forte
Composed in America
By
MR. P. LANDRIN DUPORT
Professor of Dancing from Paris
& Original Composer of Cadriels
NEW YORK
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Title page of Pierre Landrin Duport's *United States Country Dances*

pleasure, or him the justice to declare, that the specimens of fine dancing exhibited by some of his favorite scholars, excel any thing ever seen in this city. It may confidently be asserted that his daughter particularly, in the neatness, agility, grace, correct and elegant finish of her steps has no equal in America. . . ."[27]

Never lacking in enterprise or initiative, Duport inaugurated in the spring of 1802 a subscription series of "Juvenile Assemblies," which provided a ball for young people every fortnight from February to the middle of April.[28]

With the coming of spring the wandering Duports were off to Baltimore. The complacency of well-established teachers, such as B. Brunelot and James Robardet, was upset by Duport's extravagant claims:

"A peculiar advantage enjoyed by the pupils of Mr. Duport," stated one advertisement, "is that after six months instruction from him, they never require the assistance of any other master, but become themselves competent judges of the performances of others."[29]

Duport promptly placed his *United States Country Dances* on sale at the music store of Joseph Carr, who was a prominent music publisher.[30] Later Duport's dances were also sold at George Hill's book and stationery store.[31]

In Baltimore the Duports renewed their friendship with Alexander Reinagle, who was one of the managers of the New Theatre on Holliday Street. Although he was at least thirty years her senior, and had two sons by a pervious marriage who were nearly as old as she, Reinagle fell in love with Anna Duport. They were married by the Rev. Dr. James Inglis, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, on September 20, 1803.[32] Reinagle's song, "Dear Anna," preserved in the Library of Congress, may have been composed for his young wife.[33]

27. Jan. 8, 1802. The same letter appeared in the *New York Herald*, Jan. 9, 1802.
28. *New York Evening Post*, Feb. 4, 18, March 4, 18, 29, April 6, 1802.
29. *Federal Gazette and Baltimore Daily Advertiser*, Dec. 22, 1802.
30. Ibid., July 8, 1802.
31. Ibid., Feb. 10, 1804.
32. Ibid., Sept. 21, 1803.
33. The words of "Dear Anna," by George Heyl, hint at troubles and separation: "Sweet love has its pangs and hope bids us to wait. . . ." If they were inspired by Reinagle's love for Anna Duport, the song was probably written before their marriage. It was published by G. Willig, No. 185 Market St., Phila., between 1798 and 1804.

With Anna married and lost to the dance, P. L. Duport began to long for another serious pupil whom he could train for a ballet career, as he had once trained young Louis. His advertisement in the winter of 1803 carried a wistful postscript: "N.B. If an active youth of respectable connections should offer as a pupil, for a *term,* Mr. Duport will engage to render him a proficient in the art of dancing."[34] No one offered. In the future, he would devote himself to teaching social dancing, and his balls would no longer be distinguished by the performances of star soloists like Louis and Anna.

During the next years, Duport divided his activities between Baltimore and New York. He remained in Baltimore most of the time until the winter of 1806-07, when he taught at Ross's Long Room, 42 Broad Street, New York.[35] The spring and summer were spent in Baltimore, and when he returned to New York in the autumn of 1807, he was unable to find a studio. Back he went to Baltimore, while another dancing teacher, Mr. Armour, lured his former pupils with the promise that "The style and steps he adopts are a near resemblance to those of *Mr. Duport.*"[36]

Duport probably would have settled permanently in New York —he had declared this intention[37]—had it not been for the death of Alexander Reinagle. Anna and her husband had been spending the winters in Philadelphia, where Reinagle was co-manager (as well as musical director) of the Chesnut Street Theatre, as he was of Baltimore's New Theatre. (His partner until 1806 was the widow of Thomas Wignell; after her marriage to William Warren, he took over his wife's share of the business.) Although the Baltimore theatre seasons were shorter (about six weeks each in the spring and fall) the Reinagles seem to have considered Baltimore as their home. They had an attractive two-story brick house on Holliday Street, directly opposite the theatre. It was here that Alexander Reinagle died, on September 21, 1809. His obituary appeared in the *Federal Gazette* next day: "Died, on Thursday evening last, Mr. Alexander Reinegle [sic], in the 62nd year of his age, one of the managers of the Baltimore and Philadelphia Theatres. His talents as a musical composer were unrivalled upon this continent: his intrinsic goodness of heart,

34. *Federal Gazette,* Nov. 22, 24, 30, Dec. 12, 1803.
35. *New York Evening Post,* Oct. 6, Nov. 1, 1806.
36. Ibid., Nov. 13, 1807.
37. Ibid., May 1, 1809.

Alexander Reinagle. By an unknown painter. Courtesy of Philip M. Copp

and the mildness and urbanity of his manners, endeared him to his friends, by whom his loss will be consequently sincerely regretted."[38]

Duport was with his daughter when her husband died, and he cancelled his plans to return to New York. Just a few days later, he opened his dancing school in "Peck's large room, South St.," and settled down with his wife and Anna in the house on Holliday Street,[39] which Anna had inherited. Anna needed her parents to look after her, for she was pregnant. Her only child, George Anna

38. The birth date usually assigned to Alexander Reinagle is 1756. This is given in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (ed. Eric Blom [New York, 1955]) while *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians* (rev. Nicolas Slonimsky [New York, 1958]) gives the date of his *baptism* as April 23, 1756. If he was born in 1756, Alexander Reinagle would have been 53 at the time of his death, and not "in his 62nd year" as stated in the contemporary obituaries. (*Federal Gazette,* Sept. 22, 1809, and *Baltimore American,* Sept. 23, 1809.) Was Reinagle perhaps born in 1748, but not baptized until 1756?
39. *Federal Gazette,* Sept. 26, Oct. 7, 1809.

Reinagle, was born on May 1, 1810, nearly eight months after the death of her father.[40]

Reinagle's estate remained unsettled for more than a year. The *Federal Gazette and Baltimore Daily Advertiser* for October 17, 1810, carried the announcement of an auction sale of "a valuable collection of vocal and instrumental music, being part of the Library of the late *Alexander Reingle* [sic] Esq. deceased & is sold under the direction of the Hon. the Judges of the Orphan's Court. . . ." A catalogue of this music was published. Have any copies survived?

Reinagle's will had left all of his property, including his interest in the Baltimore Theatre, to Anna.[41] The intercession of the Orphans' Court was probably due to the fact that no provision had been made for Hugh and Thomas, his sons by his first marriage. Hugh, nineteen years old, was already a promising scenic designer. He became a well-known and successful artist before his death in New Orleans in 1835.[42]

40. Duport Family Bible, in the possession of Mr. Philip M. Copp.
41. *Wills,* Vol. 8, p. 446 (Maryland Historical Society). Mr. Ernest C. Krohn of St. Louis, Missouri, owns several documents which show payments made by William Warren to Mrs. Anna Reinagle for rent due to her in June, 1810, for her share in the Baltimore Theatre. These papers were kindly brought to my attention by Mr. Frederick Freedman.
42. *Baltimore American,* June 11, 1835. Quoted by Francis C. Haber, Librarian, Maryland Historical Society, in a letter to the author, Jan. 23, 1957.

THE "PROFESSOR OF THE ART"

Pierre Landrin Duport continued to teach until he was over sixty, although from time to time he supplemented his income with other ventures. While George Anna Reinagle was still a baby, Duport moved to Georgetown, D.C., with his wife, daughter, and granddaughter. There he opened a Snuff Warehouse on Bridge Street. Advertisements inform us that his stock also included "an elegant assortment of COUNTING-HOUSE PENKNIVES, likewise some handsome SNUFF BOXES and fresh TONQUA BEANS. JEWS HARPS of various kinds, Playing and Military VISITING CARDS, DICE . . . SNUFF and TOBACCO, amongst which is some first quality LADIES TWIST."[1]

In Georgetown, Duport held his classes at William Crawford's New Assembly Room. Balls and Cotillion Parties were announced at regular intervals, but they no longer included ballets or elaborate divertissements. After the rich and fruitful period, during the 1790's, when Francisquy, Placide, Legé, Mme. Placide-Douvillier, young Louis Duport, and P. L. Duport himself had been so active, there had been a marked decline of interest in ballet. Theatrical dancing in America did not enjoy its first renaissance until the late 1820's, when the advent of Mme. Hutin, Mlle. Céleste and others heralded the romantic ballet.

In 1813, there was a good deal of anti-French feeling in the United States because of Napoleon's ruthless conquests, and the Russian victories over the French army were publicly celebrated in Georgetown. The War of 1812 was raging closer to home, and although Duport continued to teach, the size of his classes was undoubtedly affected. In September 1814, the war was being fought around nearby Baltimore and Duport was reduced to announcing that he would open his dancing school as early as possible "if

1. *Federal Republican and Commercial Gazette* (Georgetown, D.C.), Nov. 12, 1812.

sufficient encouragement be offered." The same advertisement shows that the family may have been in straightened circumstances, for it offered for sale at the snuff store:

An elegant Cremona violin, and Case
Quartets and Duettos, of different Authors
Geminiani's Art of Playing the Violin, containing a number of examples, and every information for a beginner.
Six volumes of tunes of French dances, with explanations, and outlines of the figures.
A Book of Scotch tunes—and
Blank Music Books.[2]

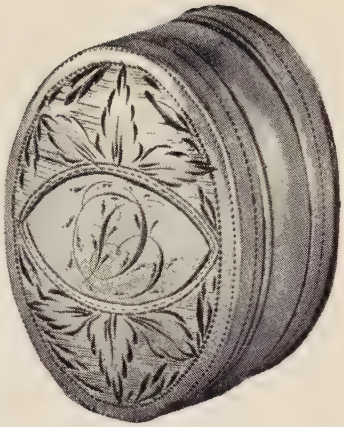
Possibly Duport did not succeed in disposing of the "elegant Cremona violin," for it may have been the Stradivarius which was passed down in his family until about 1900, when it was sold by his great-grandson, Lewis Johnson Davis, along with his collection of *pochettes.*[3]

In 1815, Anna Duport Reinagle was married, for the second time, to Lewis Johnson, a banker.[4] An astute business man, he was for many years the head of the Washington Savings Bank, and later founded his own firm of investment bankers, Lewis Johnson and Company. In their last years P. L. Duport and his wife lived with the Johnsons, first on Pennsylvania Avenue and later at 11th and G Streets, in the Greenleaf Point section of Washington.

Duport, however, was not the sort of man to enjoy a life of idleness at the expense of a prosperous son-in-law. In 1822 he had a "snuff and fancy store" at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 12th Street, N.W.,[5] but apparently he did not stay at home to take care of it, for that year he was teaching in Williamsburg, Virginia. In the early 1820's he visited many Virginia towns, spending a few months in each. His manuscript notebook includes compositions dated between 1821 and 1825 at Richmond, Fredericksburg, Newington Academy, Norfolk (which he spelled "Northfork"!), Gloucester and Williamsburg.

Leroy Anderson, a gentleman of Williamsburg, provides us with an excellent picture of Duport at this time. In a letter to

2. Ibid., Sept. 26, 1814.
3. Letter from Mrs. Isabel Mauro French Tharp, the great-great-great granddaughter of Pierre Landrin Duport, to the author, March 6, 1957.
4. Entry in the Duport Family Bible.
5. Judah Delano, *The Washington Directory,* Washington, D.C., 1822, p. 32.



Engraved silver snuff box belonging to Pierre Landrin Duport. Courtesy of Captain Charles C. Copp (Photograph by Peter A. Juley, New York)

Joseph Prentis of Williamsburg and Suffolk, Virginia, dated at Williamsburg on April 9, 1822, Anderson describes him vividly:

> We have here also at this time, the celebrated Mons P. L. Duport, the most scientific *Dancing* Master I have ever met with. He is a regular *Professor* of the art—has a *diploma* in form, signed by 400 *Parisiens*—and letters of recommendation &c. innumerable *Dukes* and *Lords,* and every thing under *crowned* heads, attest his "*talens extraordinaires*" He figured at Richmond the last Winter, and I have from "Enquirer" Ritchie Esq. two letters in his behalf. They go to establish the fact of his ability and success in Communicating to his disciples the grammar as well as the *exercise*—the *science* as well as the *art* of Dancing, deportment, &c. I am sorry he did not visit Williamsburg *half a century ago*—however, my son Leroy, just eight years old—will enjoy the advantage his father missed. Badinage apart, he is really a most amusing, lively sensible man in his way—full of anecdote—and accompanies my spouse with his violin, so well, in the most difficult music pieces, that I expect a *Concerto* at home, at least three times a week. Two elegant mahogany cases, contain his assortment of violins, (he has three of them) and the larger case which serves me for a writing desk, is *deposited* at our house.[6]

6. Letter from Leroy Anderson to Joseph Prentis, in the Prentis Papers now on deposit at the Alderman Library of the University of Virginia. Quoted by the kind permission of the owner, Mrs. Robert H. Webb. This passage was kindly brought to my attention by Mrs. Rutherfoord Godwin of the Research Department of Colonial Williamsburg.

A series of letters (copies of the originals) from Duport's wife, Charlotte, are still in the possession of their descendants. They give the impression that she was a far less pleasant person than her husband. They are business letters, concerned with Mrs. Duport's persistent efforts to collect part of the estate of her mother, who died in Dublin in 1812, and they depict her as a rather mercenary individual with a somewhat distorted idea of her rights.

According to these letters, Charlotte Duport had not written to her mother or father, nor made any effort to communicate with her sister Ann or her brother Michiel, from the time of her departure from Dublin in 1786-87 until thirty years later when she began her attempts to claim part of the estate. Charlotte's father, Gordon McNeill (the erstwhile hornpipe dancer) had died in Dublin in 1803, leaving considerable property to his wife, Mrs. Ann McNeill. When she died intestate in 1812, her younger daughter, Mrs. Ann Kennedy, had been named executrix and apparently had shared the estate with Michiel. Some time later Mrs. Kennedy, accidentally meeting a gentleman named Foxall who knew her long-lost sister Charlotte in America, had taken the opportunity to send her a ring as a memento. Charlotte, far from being pleased with the souvenir or happy to have news of her family, had replied by attempting to sue for part of her mother's estate. In one letter to her sister she embarked on a veritable tirade:

> . . . you also mention my mother Died without a Will & you administered being the Eldest only child there, I *have* expected being the Eldest left you wo'd have rendered me *some account* . . . my sister, for a moment, change situations, & see how *you* would like the manner an *only* & *ought to be* affectionet sister wou'd use you. you were raised in the lap of indulgence have a kind & affectionet Husband, fine children surrounding you, no Pecuniary embaresments to spoil you not left depending on your Husband for a cent in your Pocket cherished by friends & Fortune, fostered by the kind hand of Heaven, how can you so truly blessed on Earth, fe*el* for a *sister* wandering in a foreign land fled from her friends 'tis true, but no saving hand to guide her wayward fate, suffering and neglected keep from obtaining any knowledge of her friends by a Husand [sic]—what would *you* my sister say to her, who peacably shared her parents attentions & afterwards fortune who cou'd bear the semblance of wishing to retain the Poor Pitance, which heaven has left her, by a Mothers death, you know, she did not her part by me, no matter for the cause, it originated with her, and on her's

the effects fell, for none of her children prospered, be not like her, you have children you must one day Die, impune not an helpless Orphan sister. . . .[7]

The "helpless orphan" was about forty-five years old when that letter was written in 1819. Although she appealed to the Judges of His Majesty's Court of Prerogatives in Dublin, and to the French consul there, continuing her fight for more than ten years, with the occasional assistance of her banker son-in-law, Lewis Johnson, she never succeeded in collecting anything.

In only one of her letters does Charlotte Duport give any real news of her husband. On January 9, 1820, she wrote: "My Husband is growing sickly and this summer we thought we should loose him, but providence has spared him for some wise purpose no doubt."[8]

The pleasant picture of Duport happily playing concertos with the Andersons in Williamsburg, two years later, makes one suspect that he left the shrewish Charlotte behind in Washington while he was wandering around Virginia!

Pierre Landrin Duport's devotion to his little granddaughter, George Anna Reinagle, is attested in the "Music Book for fancy tunes" which he carefully prepared for her in 1825, when she was fifteen. It includes a "franch cotillion, George Anna," which was especially "composed for Miss Reinagle," several allemandes, including one which he marked "publish 1783," some waltzes, including "Duport's Waltz published by Carr Baltimore," and a copy of the aria *Di tanti palpiti,* from Rossini's *Tancredi,* in Duport's hand.

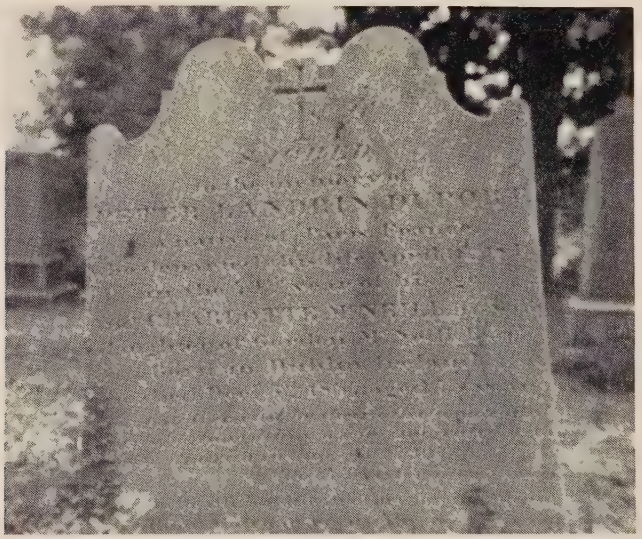
George Anna (or Georganna, as she later signed her name) married George Madison Davis, a teller in her step-father's bank. P. L. Duport lived to see the birth of his great-grandson, Lewis

7. Letter from Charlotte McNeill Duport to Mrs. Ann McNeill Kennedy, dated at Washington City, March 25, 1819.
8. Letter from Charlotte McNeill Duport to Mrs. Ann McNeill Kennedy, dated at Washington, January 9, 1820.

Johnson Davis (named after his step-father), in 1834. One of the last compositions in his notebook is called (with an error of a generation), "Great, Great Grand-son."[9] This is almost the only cheerful entry in the final pages, for others are "The onhappy Man," "Distratto" and "The Miscery of Life." At the very end, however, there are two bright spots, in "The Rose" and "The Snowball," which have descriptions of the dances along with the music.

9. *Mss. Dance Tunes,* p. 65. This great-grandson of Duport's, Lewis Johnson Davis, became quite an important figure in the Washington of his day. First a teller (like his father, George Madison Davis) in the Washington Savings Bank, he later rose to head the firm of Lewis Johnson & Co. In 1896, Lewis Johnson Davis was President of the Washington Stock Exchange. He was a member of the Archaelogical, American Historical and Columbian Historical Societies. It was he who arranged for the permanent preservation of the Duport and Reinagle manuscripts, which he presented to the Library of Congress in 1904. He married Margaret Jane Keller in 1854, but died childless in 1906.

In the present century, the musical talents of the Duports have reappeared in the concert singer Isabel Mauro French (Mrs. Edwin J. Tharp), a great-great-great granddaughter of Pierre Landrin Duport. Originally trained as a violinist, she later turned to singing, making her New York concert debut in 1932. In frequent concert appearances during the following decade she won high praise for her delicate sense of style, musical intelligence, and extraordinary abilities as an interpreter of art songs. She made a number of recordings, including Schumann's *Frauenliebe und Leben* cycle, and the pavane, "Belle qui tient ma vie," from Thoinot Arbeau's *Orchesographie.*



Gravestone of Pierre Landrin Duport and his wife, Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Washington, D.C. (Photograph by Lillian Moore)

Charlotte McNeill Duport died in Washington on December 5, 1837. Pierre Landrin Duport survived her by nearly four years. When he died, the great Austrian ballerina Fanny Elssler was in the midst of her triumphant American tour, and the golden age of romantic ballet had begun. Duport may even have seen Elssler dance, when she appeared in Washington in July 1840.

The Washington *Globe* for April 12, 1841, carried the modest obituary of the dancing master of another era:

> Died, on the afternoon of Easter Sunday, the 11th inst. in the 79th year of his age, after a most distressing illness of 30 hours, preceded by a lingering illness of many years' duration, Mr. P. L. Duport, a native of Paris, in France, and for the last fifty-one years a highly respectable citizen of the United States—most of that time in Georgetown and this city.
>
> His funeral will take place at the house of his son-in-law, Lewis Johnson, corner of 11th and g streets, at 3½ o'clock, on Tuesday, the 13th, where the friends of the deceased and of the family are respectfully invited to attend without further notice.

Originally buried in old St. Patrick's, (this cemetery is no longer in existence), P. L. Duport now rests, with his wife and daughter Anna, in the beautiful wooded cemetery of Mt. Olivet, on the outskirts of Washington.

APPENDIX I

TWO LOUIS DUPORTS, OR ONE?

Louis Antoine Duport was probably the greatest dancer of his generation. In brilliance and virtuosity he outshone Auguste Vestris, who was, to be sure, twenty years his senior. For about five years (from 1803 until Duport's abrupt departure for Russia in 1808), the rivalry between the two stars divided Paris into two camps. In bitterness and intensity, the struggle was far more fierce than the later contest for supremacy between Marie Taglioni and Fanny Elssler. It inspired an epic poem, Berchoux' *La Danse, ou la Guerre des Dieux de l'Opéra,* and created such problems for the directors of the Opéra that on at least one occasion Napoleon Bonaparte was called upon to arbitrate.

From March 14, 1797, when, as "L. Duport," he was listed last among the soloists in Maximilien Gardel's ballet *Le Premier Navigateur* at the Paris Opéra, the career of Louis Antoine Duport can be traced almost day by day. His earlier life and training remain something of a mystery.

There is no need here for more than a brief synopsis of his career. In 1797, he and his sister Marie Adelaide danced minor roles at the Paris Opéra. In 1798 and 1799, they were leading dancers at the Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique, where they made quite a sensation in Louis Milon's ballet *Pygmalion.* Early in 1800 they danced at the Théâtre de la Gaîté, returning later that year to the Opéra.

After a spectacular success when he substituted for Saint-Amand in the title role of *Le Retour de Zéphyr,* Louis Duport enjoyed one triumph after another, until his extraordinary popularity jeopardized the position of Vestris himself. Not satisfied with the laurels he was earning as a dancer, Duport wished to become a choreographer. He managed to persuade the Opéra management to present his first ballet, *Acis et Galathée,* in 1805. Its success led to the production of

his *Le Barbier de Seville* (also known as *Figaro*) in 1806, and the divertissement *L'Hymen de Zéphyr, ou Le Volage Fixé,* in the same year. With diabolical cleverness, he managed to inveigle the management into doubling and tripling his salary until, by the time he was twenty-six, it equalled that of Auguste Vestris, who had been dancing before Duport was born.

Nothing seemed to satisfy Duport's consuming ambition. It was soon apparent that he aimed to supplant the established choreographer, the veteran Pierre Gardel. The audacity of his demands, combined with his capriciousness and egotism, eventually made his position at the Opéra untenable. In 1808, when his arrogant behavior had put him in danger of arrest, he suddenly slipped out of Paris in the middle of the night, disguised as a woman (and accompanied by the former mistress of Napoleon, the actress Mlle. George) and set out for Russia. His later triumphs were enjoyed in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Naples and Vienna, where he eventually became director of the Vienna Opera. He died in Paris in 1853.

Probably because so little research has been done on the history of dancing in the United States, ballet historians have never taken notice of the existence of the "American" Louis Duport. There is some evidence to indicate that the "American" and the celebrated Louis Antoine Duport were two separate people. However, it is not conclusive. Since several strange coincidences appear to point to the opposite solution—that they were identical—it seems worth while to examine the evidence on both sides of the question.

Chronology: The "American" Louis Duport was presumably born in 1781. His parentage has not been established. (See p. 23.)

Louis Antoine Duport's death certificate gives his age as seventy when he died on October 19, 1853.[1] In that case he was born in 1783. His obituary in the *Almanach des Beaux-Arts*[2] states that he died at seventy-two and hence was born in 1781. This is the date given by Larousse.[3] Duport himself, on his marriage to Therese

1. The official *Acte de Décès,* located by Mr. Ivor Guest in the Archives de la Seine, Paris, reads: "Louis Antoine Duport, rentier, agé de 70 ans, marié à Thérèse Neumann, le dit défunt né à Paris et y décédé en son domicile, rue Balzac, 13, hier (19 octobre 1853) à 8 heures du soir."
2. *Almanach de la Littérature, du Théâtre et des Beaux-Arts* (Paris, 1854), p. 87.
3. P. Larousse, "Louis Antoine Duport," *Dictionnaire du XIX Siècle.*

Neumann in 1812, declared that he was born in Paris on January 1, 1786.[4] Since he was marrying a sixteen-year-old girl, it would not have been unnatural for him to prefer to be twenty-six rather than twenty-nine or thirty-one years old.

Louis Antoine Duport was the son of a sculptor, Joseph Robert Duport, and his wife Maria Desseule.[5] He had a sister, Marie Adelaide ("Minette"), who became a well-known ballerina, and at least two brothers, Pierre and Auguste, both of whom were musicians.

A "M. Duport" is listed among the ensemble of "Zéphyrs et Amours" in the libretto of Pierre Gardel's *Psyché,* first presented at the Théâtre des Arts (Paris Opéra) on December 14, 1790.[6] If this was Louis Antoine, then the "American" Louis Duport was definitely a different person, for he was in Philadelphia at that date. It is possible, however, that it was Pierre, who later made some appearances as a mime.

The strongest evidence we have discovered in support of the theory of two Louis Duports is the listing of "L. Duport" among the pupils of Deshayes at the Paris Opéra in 1794. The "American" Louis Duport danced in Newport on October 31, 1793, and in Charleston on April 21, 1794. It is highly unlikely that he returned to Europe between these dates, even though ships sailed directly to France from most American ports, including Charleston. (See p. 41.)

The "American" Louis Duport made his last recorded appearance on August 19, 1796, in Savannah. Louis Antoine Duport danced at the Paris Opéra in Gardel's ballet *Le Premier Navigateur* on March 14, 1797.[7] The fact that he was listed as "L. Duport" indicates that there was another male Duport in the company, possibly his brother Pierre, for it was customary at that period for the Opéra announcements to carry only the last name of a dancer, unless there were two of the same name and sex.

Records of the Paris Opéra school are incomplete, and French theatrical periodicals of the revolutionary period are scarce; but it

4. Register of the Parish of St. Augustin, Vienna, Nov. 21, 1812.
5. Ibid.
6. *Psyché,* ballet-pantomime, en trois actes, par M. Gardel, Représenté pour la première fois sur le Théâtre des Arts, le 14 Décembre 1790. A Bruxelles, Chez Deboubers, Imprimeur-Libraire, M.DCC.XCV., p. 4.
7. *Courrier des Spectacles* (Paris), March 14, 1797.

Louis Antoine Duport (M. Borisoglebsky, *Materials for a History of Russian Ballet*)

is quite possible that other definite references to appearances by Louis Antoine Duport in Paris between 1790 and 1796 (while the other Louis Duport was dancing in America) may turn up. It should be borne in mind that during these years Paris was in constant turmoil, as the result of the French Revolution.

Family: Louis Antoine Duport was extraordinarily devoted to his sister Minette, whom he coached assiduously, and who remained his favorite partner until she married Baptiste Petit. His efforts to further his sister's career were a constant source of annoyance to the other choreographers and to the Paris Opéra officials. He also managed to find a job for his brother Pierre in the orchestra at St. Petersburg when he was dancing there.[8]

The "American" Louis Duport seems to have had little love for his family, or foster-family. He left the home of Pierre Landrin Duport when he was about twelve years old. In the family Bible kept

8. Adam P. Glushkovsky, *Vospominania Baletmeistera* [*Reminiscences of a Ballet Master*] (Leningrad-Moscow 1940), p. 80.

by Anna Duport Reinagle Johnson and her descendants, there is no mention of the boy who was supposedly her brother.[9]

During the French Revolution many families were torn apart. For example, the cellist Jean-Louis Duport took with him to Berlin, in 1789, the orphaned daughter of the violinist Guerin. (See p. 14.)

Environment: Between the lines of impersonal newspaper advertisements, it is possible to deduce the fact that P. L. Duport aroused jealousy and fear, mingled with a grudging admiration, among his colleagues and rivals, the other dancing masters. They respected and admired his teaching methods (see p. 76) but his energy and enterprise disturbed their complacency. Wherever he went he advertised extensively, and at the same time there was a marked increase in the announcements of other dancing masters, who had been drifting quietly along for years, without seeking newspaper publicity. P. L. Duport certainly did not believe in keeping his talents a secret.

The high-handed methods of Louis Antoine Duport, in dealing with his professional rivals, bear a marked similarity to the tactics of Pierre Landrin Duport regarding other teachers. Did he learn boldness and supreme self-confidence as a child, through observing the success of his guardian's methods?

Training: Almost nothing is known about the technical training of Louis Antoine Duport. "L. Duport" was listed as a pupil of Deshayes at the Paris Opéra school in 1794, and the Duport who danced as one of the little "Amours" in *Psyché* in 1790 was undoubtedly a pupil of the same school.

In 1804, when L. A. Duport was at the height of his fame, an anonymous critic, a partisan of Vestris in the famous rivalry, published a pamphlet violently attacking Duport, entitled *Opinion d'un Habitué de l'Académie Impériale de Musique, dans l'affaire de M. Duport*. One of the things of which he accused the young dancer was insufficient training. In the pamphlet which he issued as a reply, Duport wrote: "I will say nothing of the joke which he makes of my two years of training and nine months of fame: it is only in the mind of Mr. Anonymous, that rapid progress is not honored."[10] Duport does not deny the brevity of his training.

9. Information from Mr. Philip M. Copp.
10. Louis Antoine Duport, *Réponse de M. Duport, artiste de l'Académie Impériale de Musique, à un pamphlet intitulé: Opinion d'un Habitué de l'Académie Impériale de Musique, dans l'affaire de M. Duport* (Paris, [1804]), p. 13.

If he had been a pupil of the Paris Opéra school without interruption since 1790 or earlier, Louis Antoine Duport would have had at least eight years of training at the Opéra before he left it, in 1798, to dance at the Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique.

The "American" Louis Duport must have studied ballet before he arrived in the United States at the age of nine, but the names of those who taught him in America—Pierre Landrin Duport, Jean Baptiste Francisquy, and Alexandre Placide—would not have seemed very impressive to a Parisian who expected star dancers of the Opéra to be pupils of Gardel or Vestris.

On the other hand, Bonet, the Opéra director, spoke of Duport (in rather general terms) as among those "raised at the breast of the Opéra." In 1807, when he had been under contract there for seven years, Duport, during one of his frequent bouts with the administration, submitted his resignation. (It was not accepted.) In his report of the affair, Bonet wrote to the Prefect of the Palace, his superior: "The Opéra which has always been the school of talent has always been the dupe of those raised at its breast. The example of Mr. Duport shows how much the authorities should do to deflate the exaggerated pretensions of artists who think they can lay down the law."[11]

Musicianship: Both Louis Duports played the violin, although there is no evidence that Louis Antoine ever played it in public, as the "American" did so often. Most dancers of that period were competent violinists, since the *pochette* played by the dancing master was the customary accompaniment to lessons.

Language: We have discovered no evidence that L. A. Duport knew any English, although many letters by him in fluent French and awkward German have survived. Although Pierre Landrin Duport moved in French circles in America, his wife was Irish, and he frequently made his notes in English (spelled with great originality!). The Placide company was almost exclusively French and probably used no other language.

Repertoire: Both Louis Duports were *demi-caractère* dancers. Several bits of evidence—perhaps coincidental—indicate a similarity of taste in roles. The "American" made his Charleston debut in a solo, *Les Folies d'Espagne*. This piece of music was a favorite with many dancers of the period. However, the Harvard Theatre Col-

11. Archives Nationales, Paris, Dossier AJ^{13}81.

lection possesses a letter of L. A. Duport, which proves that he had a special predeliction for it. Addressed to the dancer Louis Henry, and dated at Paris, September 3 (no year, but 1806, after the production of Duport's ballet *Figaro*), it reads:

> My dear Henry,
>
> They tell me that you are thinking of using the air *Les Folies d'Espagne* for your reappearance, (I do not place any faith in this rumor), you know that this air belongs to me and that no one can use it unless I refuse to dance it. Besides, it is danced in Figaro.
>
> I beg you to reassure me completely, by a word,
>
> Your comrade,
>
> Duport.

Another 1806 letter of Duport's, addressed to Bonet, suggests that *Les Folies d'Espagne* and a Gavotte be programmed for a special performance, with Grétry's opera *La Caravane du Caire* (a standard favorite of the period, in which both Louis Duports danced on various occasions).[12]

One of the solos arranged by Pierre Landrin Duport for his small protegé was *Henry IV, ou Le Noble.* (See p. 37). In Naples, twenty-five years later, and long after the subject had exhausted its former popularity, L. A. Duport staged a ballet on the theme of Henry IV: *La Clemenza di Enrico IV di Borbone.*[13]

In Russia, in 1809, L. A. Duport staged a ballet called *The Americans, or, The Fortunate Shipwreck.* This may or may not have been based on a ballet created by Noverre in Stuttgart, and revived in Vienna in 1768, called *Der Gluckliche Schiffbruch.* Jean Dauberval also produced a *Happy Shipwreck* (Turin, 1771) and there were other ballets with this title, but Duport's seems to have been the only one called *The Americans.*

Appearance: No likeness of the "American" Louis Duport has been found, so there is nothing to compare with the few known pictures of L. A. Duport. However, the latter is known to have been unusually short and boyish in appearance. The Russian dancer Adam Glushkovsky describes him as a "short, thin little man" (going on to say that "his brother Pierre, on the other hand . . . distinguished

12. Ibid.

13. *La Clemenza di Enrico IV di Borbone, ballo eroico pantomimico, composto e diretto da Luigi Duport, e rappresentato la prima volta in Napoli, nel real Teatro di S. Carlo, il 12 gennaio 1818* . . . Napoli, 1818. Libretto.

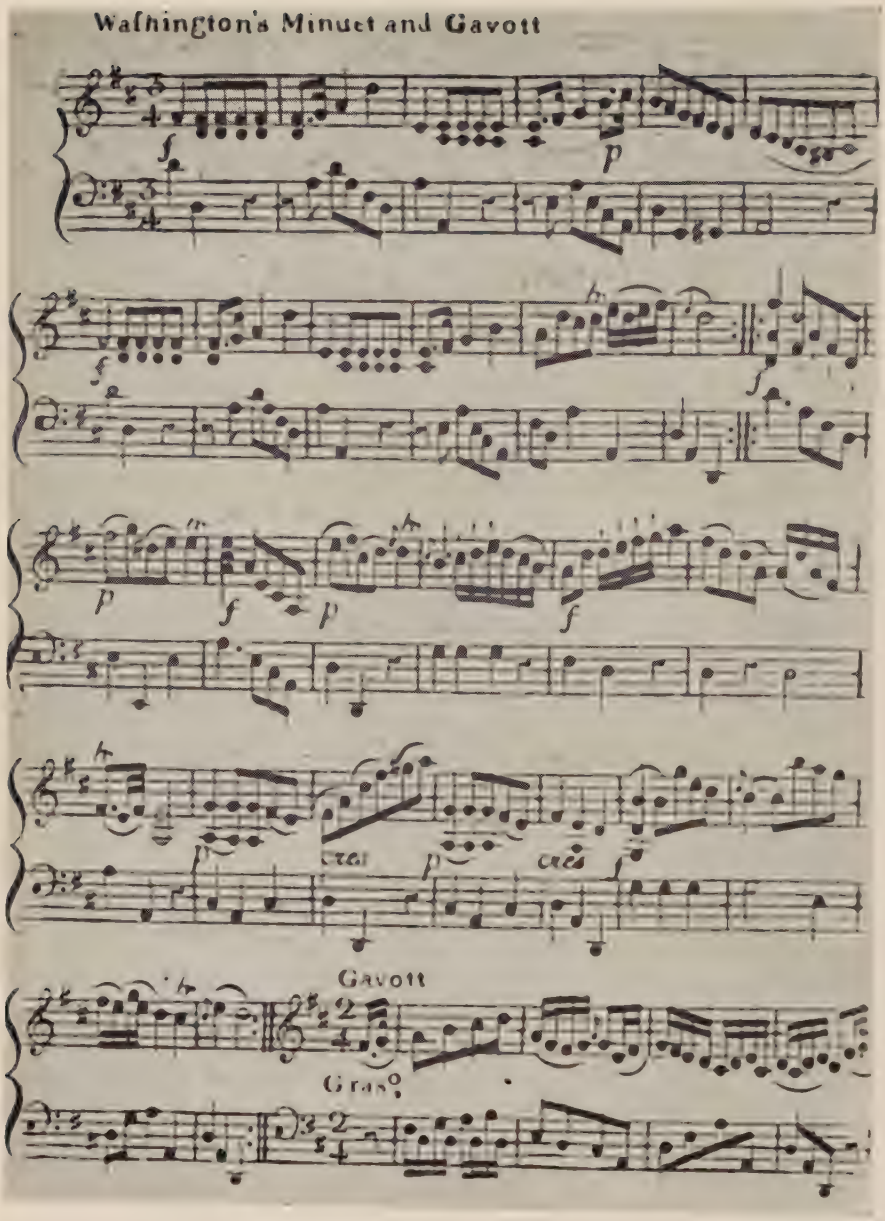
himself by his giant stature.")[14] The historian of the Russian theatre, Arapov, says of L. A. Duport: "He was rather small, well proportioned, had a pleasant, lively physiognomy and was very graceful. . . ."[15] In 1817, Stendhal compared him to a "young cat."[16] Auguste Vestris scornfully referred to him as "that little fellow who turns and turns!"[17]

The "American" Louis Duport was small and light enough at fifteen for Alexandre Placide to carry him on his shoulders while dancing on the tight-rope. (See p. 52.) Also, he was billed as "Master Duport" up to the time of his disappearance, another indication that he looked exceptionally young.

Temperament: Louis Antoine Duport is known to have been supremely self-confident, egotistical, stubborn, determined, thrifty to the point of avarice, but generous to those less fortunate than himself, clever, intelligent, and, of course, miraculously gifted as a dancer.

The "American" Louis Duport had the courage to leave home at the age of twelve, to make his own way. His career, until he disappeared at fifteen, was extraordinary. If he did succeed in getting back to Paris, rejoining his family, and carving out a resplendent career in the capitals of Europe, he might very well have developed, in the process, a character as purposeful, as resourceful, and as strongly individual as that of Louis Antoine Duport.

14. Glushkovsky, op. cit., p. 80.
15. Pimen Arapov, *Letopis Russkogo Teatra* [*Annals of the Russian Theatre*] (St. Petersburg, 1861), p. 186.
16. Henry Beyle (Stendhal), *Rome, Naples, et Florence* (Paris, 1854), p. 248: "Pour Duport, c'est une ancienne admiration. Il m'amuse comme un jeune chat; je le regarderais danser des heures entières. . . ."
17. Larousse, loc. cit.



"Washington's Minuet" by Pierre Landrin Duport

APPENDIX II

THE PUBLISHED MUSIC OF PIERRE LANDRIN DUPORT

The following list, which is doubtless incomplete, is an attempt to consolidate information (including Duport's own manuscript notes) concerning the music—much of it accompanied by directions for dancing—published by Pierre Landrin Duport during his lifetime. My principal guide has been Oscar G. T. Sonneck's indispensable *Bibliography of Early Secular American Music,* in the edition revised and enlarged by William Treat Upton in 1945. However, this covers only music published up to 1800, and several of Duport's compositions appeared after that date. Further information resulted from queries to thirty libraries with outstanding music departments and a number of private collectors, who have specialized in early American music.

The Duport manuscripts in the Library of Congress consist of three small volumes:

Pierre Landrin Duport. *Collection of Dance Tunes,* etc.
An autograph collection of dances composed by Duport, 1777-1834. (Abbreviated below as *Mss. Dance Tunes.*)

Pierre Landrin Duport. *Manuscript book of Violin Tunes.*
A manuscript book in the autograph of P. L. Duport, consisting of music by Duport and other composers, given by Anna Duport Reinagle Johnson to her grandson, Lewis Johnson Davis, as a souvenir of his great-grandfather, in 1849. This volume is catalogued under the names of Duport and Davis. (Abbreviated below as *Duport-Davis Mss.*)

Duport, Pierre Landrin. *Miss George Anna Reinagle. Music Book for Fancy Tunes.* 1825.
An autograph collection of music prepared by Duport for his granddaughter; contains his own compositions and a few others. (Abbreviated below: *Duport-Reinagle Mss.*)

These Duport manuscripts were donated to the Library of Congress in 1904 by Lewis Johnson Davis.

PUBLISHED MUSIC

1. Allemande.
   "Allemande Publish 1783." (*Duport-Reinagle Mss.*)
   Published in Dublin?
   No copy known.
2. [Allemande]
   "Allemant at Publish—Ball proform by three young Ladies."
   (*Mss. Dance Tunes,* N. 20.)
   No copy known.
3. Commodore Chauncey's March.
   Commodore Chauncey's March, Composed by P. L. Duport, Professor of Dancing.
   No place, no date. (Baltimore, 1813?) Same format as No. 4.
   New York Public Library.
4. Commodore Perry's March.
   Commodore Perry's March, Composed by P. L. Duport, Professor of Dancing.
   No place, no date. (Baltimore, 1813?)
   Library of Congress.
   New York Public Library.

"March—giving to Capt. Davidson Washington. this march was publish 1813 at Balt.*m* for Com.*d* Perry's March." (*Mss. Dance Tunes,* N. 7.) The music in the manuscript version corresponds with the published version.

Nos. 3 and 4 were apparently published at the same time, almost certainly by Joseph Carr, Baltimore.

5. [Cotillions]

Favorite Cotillions. Introduced by P. L. Duport. For the piano forte, harp, clarinett, flute and flagelet. New York, Engrav'd and publish'd by I. and M. Paff.

Six separate sheets, of two pages each, each sheet containing two dances. All except the final "menuit" include directions for dancing. No date.

No. I. The signal.
No. II. The polle.
No. III. Lespagnol.
No. IIII. The rose.
No. V. Hope.
No. VI. Faith.
No. VII. Charity.
No. VIII. The two friends.
No. VIII [sic] The waltz cotillion.
No. X. A menuit [sic] composed by P. L. Duport, Professor of dancing. . .
No. XI. Up and down.
No XII. The saloon.

"Copyright secured" appears on all except Nos. X and XI.

John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island (Complete).
New York Public Library (Nos. I-X).
Arthur Billings Hunt, Brooklyn, New York (Nos. I-X).
Grosvenor Library, Buffalo, New York (Nos. VII and VIII).

6. [Cotillions]

No. 1 of a New Sett of Cotillions With Figures called after the American navy. Composed by Mr. P. Langrin [sic] Duport, Professor of dancing from Paris and original composer of cadriels [sic]. New York, Printed for the Author & copyright secured. Rollinson Sct.

No date. (Published before June 21, 1802. See below.)

Includes directions for dancing.

p. 1-2. The Eagle.
p. 3-4. The Constitution.
p. 5-6. The President.
p. 7-8. The Constellation.
p. 9-10. The Essex.
p. 11-12. The Merrimack.
p. 13-14. The Chesapeak [sic].
p. 15-16. The Herald.
p. 17-18. The Experiment.
p. 19-20. The Enterprise.

Library of Congress.
Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

In the *Federal Gazette and Baltimore Daily Advertiser,* June 21, 1802, Duport announced:

A new publication
of
original music

Ambitious to receive and retain the patronage of a liberal and discerning public, Mr. Duport respectfully informs the Ladies and Gentlemen of this city, that he has published a book, entitled

with figures and accompaniments for the Piano Forte. Also, a new set of Cotillions with figures, called after the American Navy, composed by Mr. Duport, Professor of Dancing and original composer of cadriels, in America.

N.B. The above publication to be had of Mr. Duport in East-street, or at Mr. Joseph Carr's music store, north Gay-street.

It should be noted that the Cotillions had been published in New York, which Duport had left late in April; furthermore, the *United States Country Dances,* also advertised as "new," had been on sale in New York since November 11, 1800. (See No. 11, below.)

7. [Cotillions]

Two new favorite cotillions. The music and figures composed and introduced by P. L. Duport, Professor of dancing. Printed and sold at Carr's music store, Baltimore.

p. (1) Amanda.

p. (2) Rosedale.

Includes directions for dancing.

No date (possibly published 1804? See below.)

Collection of Josephine A. McDevitt and Edith A. Wright, Washington, D.C.

In an advertisement in the *Federal Gazette and Baltimore Daily Advertiser* for November 1, 1804, Duport offered to give a copy of the figures and music of the newest cotillions to his pupils.

8. Decatur's March.

Decatur's March. Composed by P. L. Duport Professor of Dancing. Baltimore. Printed and Sold at Carrs Music Store 36 Baltimore Street.

p. (1) Decatur's March.
A Trip to Canada. (Contre Dance.)
Includes directions for dancing "A Trip to Canada."

p. (2) The Fair Sex. (Cotillion.)
Fancy Minuet.
Includes directions for dancing "The Fair Sex."

No date. (Published after 1815? See below.)

Library of Congress.

"Decatur's March G-Town 1813"(*Mss. Dance Tunes,* N. 41).

"Trip to Canada—Contre-Dance Compose in Geo. Town 1812" (*Mss. Dance Tunes,* N. 37).

"The fair Sex Cotillion by Duport at G-Town 1815 . . . the fair Sex name by Mrs. Petre" (*Mss. Dance Tunes,* N. 42).

Duport's Hornpipe. (See No. 11, United States Country Dances, pp. 19-20.)

9. Duport's Waltz.

Probably published by Carr in Baltimore, 1807.

No copy known.

"Walz—Publish at Balt*m*—1807" (*Mss. Dance Tunes,* N. 34).

"Duport's Waltz published by Carr Baltimore" (*Duport-Reinagle Mss.*).

"Duports Waltz" (*Duport-Davis Mss.,* p. 29).

The music in the three manuscripts is the same.

The Fair Sex. See No. 7, Decatur's March, p. 2.

Fancy Minuet. See No. 7, Decatur's March, p. 2.

10. Savage Dance (probably not by P. L. Duport).

Evening Amusement, a collection of 50 songs and dances published by B. Carr in Philadelphia and New York and J. Carr in Baltimore in 1796 contains, on page 16, a brief melody called "Savage Dance." Sonneck (pp. 127-128 and p. 369) suggests that this may be the music for *Le sauvage,* danced by Louis Duport in Philadelphia on March 5, 1791. P. L. Duport's notebook

(*Mss. Dance Tunes,* p. 9) contains the same melody, in a different key, identified as "Savage Dance in Robinson Crusoe." *Robinson Crusoe* was, of course, a well-known eighteenth-century pantomime, frequently given throughout the United States between 1786 and 1800. Louis Duport made his Charleston debut in it, dancing *Les Folies d'Espagne* in the divertissement. However, there is no concrete evidence that P. L. Duport wrote any of the *Robinson Crusoe* music. We have included it here only because of the Sonneck suggestion.

Evening Amusement is in the Library of Congress.

A Trip to Canada. See No. 7, Decatur's March, p. 1.

11. United States Country Dances (first version).
Probably published in Philadelphia, 1791.
No copy known.
Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser, January 25, 1791, announced:
"Mr. D. Duport, Dancing-Master, has composed a new Set of fashionable Country-Dances, with figures and English steps, for the thirteen states, which every one has their names in rotation.—To be disposed of at No. 122, south Second-street."

12. United States Country Dances (second version).
United States Country Dances with Figures also Accompaniments for the Piano Forte. Composed in America By Mr. P. Landrin Duport Professor of Dancing from Paris & Original Composer of Cadriels. New York, Printed for the Author. Copyright secured—Price 1 dol. & 50 Cents. Roberts, sc. At foot of p. 20: Engraved by Wm Pirsson, No. 417, Pearl Street, New York. No date.
Copyright recorded November 3, 1800.
p. 1-2. Washington's Minuet and Gavott.
p. 3 No. 1. Vermont. French Country dance.
p. 4 No. 2. New Hampshire. Allemande.
p. 5 No. 3. Massachusett's hop.
p. 6 No. 4. Rhode Island Jigg.
p. 7 No. 5. Connecticut.
p. 8 No. 6. New York.
p. 9 No. 7. New Jersey.
p. 10 No. 8. Pennsylvania.
p. 11 No. 9. Delaware.
p. 12 No. 10. Maryland.
p. 13 No. 11. Virginia.
p. 14 No. 12. Kentucky. French Country Dance.
p. 15 No. 13. North Carolina Jigg.
p. 16 No. 14. Tennessee.
p. 17 No. 15. South Carolina.
p. 18 No. 16. Georgia. French Country dance.
p. 19-20. Duport's Hornpipe.
All except "Washington's Minuet and Gavott" and "Duport's Hornpipe" include directions for dancing.
Library of Congress.
Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
The *American Citizen and General Advertiser,* New York, carried the following notice on October 20, 1800:

A New Publication.

Ambitious to receive and retain the patronage of a liberal and discerning public, the subscriber respectfully informs the ladies and gentlemen, that shortly will be published a book of the

UNITED STATES COUNTRY DANCES,
WITH FIGURES,
Composed in America, by
Mr. P. L. Duport, *Professor of Dancing.*

In the same paper, on November 11, 1800, Duport announced:
"The United States Country Dances are now for Sale at No. 13 Broad St."
(See No. 5, Cotillions . . . called after the American Navy, for advertisement of the sale of the United States Country Dances in Baltimore, 1802.)
Washington's Minuet and Gavotte. See No. 11, United States Country Dances, pp. 1-2.

MODERN EDITIONS OF MUSIC BY PIERRE LANDRIN DUPORT.

1. Albert Stoessel's orchestral suite, *Early Americana,* published by Birchard and Co., Boston, circa 1936, contains two minuets by Pierre Landrin Duport. The entire suite consists of Philip Phile's "President's March," "General Burgoyne's March" and the two Duport Minuets. It is scored for flute, oboe, bassoon, 2 horns, triangle, harp, first and second violins, violoncello and bass. New York Public Library (full score).
2. *Music from the Days of George Washington,* collected by Carl Engel and published by the George Washington Bicentennial Commission, Washington, D.C., in 1931, includes two Minuets by Pierre Landrin Duport:
   p. 34. Minuet danced before George Washington, 1792.
   p. 35. Minuet danced before Mrs. Washington.
   These same two minuets have been recorded by Yella Pessl, on the harpsichord:
   Columbia Record 17072 D (Columbia Master Works)
   Matrix No. C O 20023-2.
   Colonial Music. Two Minuets—1792.
   1. Danced for George Washington.
   2. Danced for Martha Washington.
   On the reverse: Alexander Reinagle's Minuet and Gavotte.

APPENDIX III

BALLET AT THE CHARLESTON THEATRE, 1794-95

Compiled from Contemporary Newspapers

There is a widespread belief that ballet was almost entirely unknown in the United States until the twentieth century. This is far from true. When Louis Duport danced at the Charleston Theatre he was part of a very active ballet company, as the following statistics of a single season will show.

A.

Dancers, Singers, Actors and Acrobats

who appeared in ballets and pantomimes produced at the Charleston Theatre during the season of October 6, 1794, to June 29, 1795. Those who were primarily actors or singers were "doubling" in mimed roles or appearing in dance ensembles. * indicates principal solo dancers.

Men

Bignall, J.
Bulet, Master
Chambers, Mr.
Dainville, Mr.
Doctor, Joseph
Dorval, Mr.
Douvillier, Louis Antoine (1761-1821)
Dubois (Louis?)
Dupass, Master (1788- ?)
* Duport, Louis (1781-disappeared 1796)
* Fayolle (Fayol), Peter (1768-1837)
Francis, Mr.
* Francisquy (Francisque, Francisqui), Jean Baptiste
Gray, Mr.
Gray, Master
Hamilton, Mr.
Jones, Mr. (J., or Edward?)
Kenna, J.
Latté, Mr.
Lavalette, Mr.
Lewis, Mr.
* Placide, Alexandre (1750-1812)
Riffetts or Ricketts, Mr.
* Spinacuta, Mr. (Laurent?)
Sully, Chester
Sully, Matthew, Sr.
Sully, Matthew, Jr.
Sully, Thomas (1783-1871)
* Val, Jean Baptiste
West, J.
West, T.
West, W.

Women

Chambers, Mrs. Charlotte (née Sully)
Doctor, Mrs. Joseph
Douvillier, Mme. Louis (singer)
* Duthé, Miss
Gray, Miss
Kenna, Mrs.
* Placide, "Mme." (Suzanne Vaillande)
Pick, Mrs. Jacobus (née Elizabeth Bradshaw)
Robinson, Mrs. (formerly Mrs. Ryan)
Sully, Miss (Elizabeth?)
* Val, Mme. Jean Baptiste
West, Miss H.

B.

Ballets and Pantomimes Produced at the Charleston Theatre, 1794-95

(b)—ballet (p)—pantomime

1. The American Heroine, or, The Cruel Return (p)
2. La Belle Dorothée (p)
3. Le Ballet des Provenceaux, or, The Sailor of Marseilles (b)
4. Blaise et Babet (b)
5. Le Braconnier, or, The Game Laws (The Poacher) (b)
6. The Brother Quakers (b)
7. The Cooper, or, The Amorous Guardian (b)
8. Cupid's Revenge, or, The Metamorphoses (later known as The Old Man Grown Young) (b)
9. Death of Captain Cook (p)
10. The Death of Malbrook (p)
11. Le Déserteur Français (b)
12. The Devil on Two Sticks, or, Columbine Invisible (p)
13. Don Juan (p)
14. La Forêt Noire (b-p)
15. The Four Valiant Brothers, or, The Clemency of Charlemagne (p)
16. The Fourteenth July 1789, or, The Destruction of the Bastille (p)
17. Genevieve of Brabant (p)
18. Harlequin Doctor (p)
19. The Hunter's Frolic, or, The Merry Girl (b)
20. Jupiter and Europa, or, The Jealousy of Juno (p)
21. The Lion with the Thorn, or, Harlequin protected by Neptune (p)
22. The Merry Rustics, or, Trick upon Trick (b)
23. The Militia Man, or, The Woodcutters (b-p)
24. The Miller and the Collier (b)
25. Mirza and Lindor (b-p)
26. The Re-capture of Toulon, or, The Young Female Soldier (p)
27. The Rose and the Bud (b)
28. Rural Waggish Tricks, or, The Broken Milk Pot (b)
29. Sampson, or, The Treachery of Delila (p)
30. The Two Hunters and the Milkmaid (b)
31. Les Trois Quakers, ou, Le Caffé Hollandois (b) (not the same as The Brother Quakers)
32. The Twenty-Eighth June, 1776 (p)
33. The Whims of Galatea, or, The Power of Love (Les Caprices de Galathée (b)
34. The Unfortunate Family, or, The Generous Huntsmen (p)

C.

DANCES

A selection of incidental dances performed in or between the acts of plays and operas, 1794-95.

Allemande
Ballet Dance (Pas de Six)
Ca-Ira (Grand Dance)
La Chaconne de Punchinello (solo by Louis Duport)
Christmas Gambol (by 7 leading male dancers)
Dance of Archers (8 men and 8 women)
Double Allemande
Double Hornpipe (Mme. Placide, L. Duport)
Fandango, with Variations (solo by Louis Duport)
Grand Ballet Dance (7 men and 5 women)
Grand Ballet Pantomime Dance (11 dancers)
Hornpipe (solo by Louis Duport)
Hornpipe (solo by Mme. Placide)
Hornpipe in wooden shoes (solo by Jean Baptiste Francisquy)
Hunters' Dance (ensemble)
Minuet (Louis Duport and Miss Duthé; also danced by Master Dupass and Miss Duthé)
Minuet de la Nation (J. B. Francisquy and Mme. Placide)
Scotch Reel (8 dancers)
Triple Hornpipe (Placide, Francisquy, Duport)

Also, many classic Pas Seul, Pas de Deux, de Trois, etc.

SUPPLEMENTARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

In addition to the newspapers, manuscripts and specialized sources which have already been credited in the notes, the following books have been very helpful in the preparation of this study:

Clapp, William W. *A Record of the Boston Stage.* Boston, 1853.
Hornblow, Arthur. *A History of the Theatre in America.* Philadelphia, 1919.
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Pollock, Thomas Clark. *The Philadelphia Theatre in the Eighteenth Century.* Philadelphia, 1933.
Seilhamer, George O. *History of the American Theatre.* Philadelphia, 1888.
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Willis, Eola. *The Charleston Stage in the XVIII Century.* Columbia, S.C., 1924.

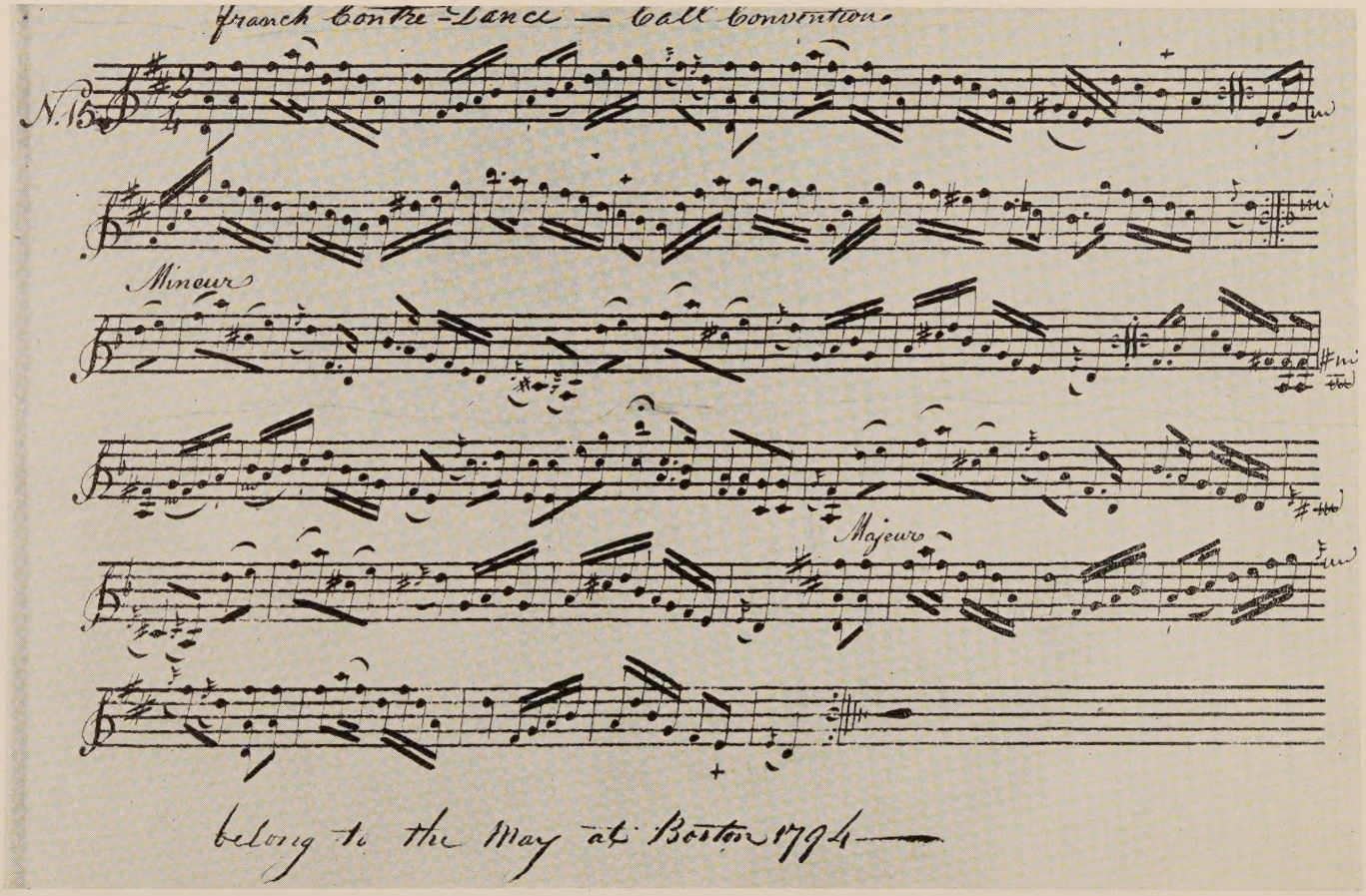
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

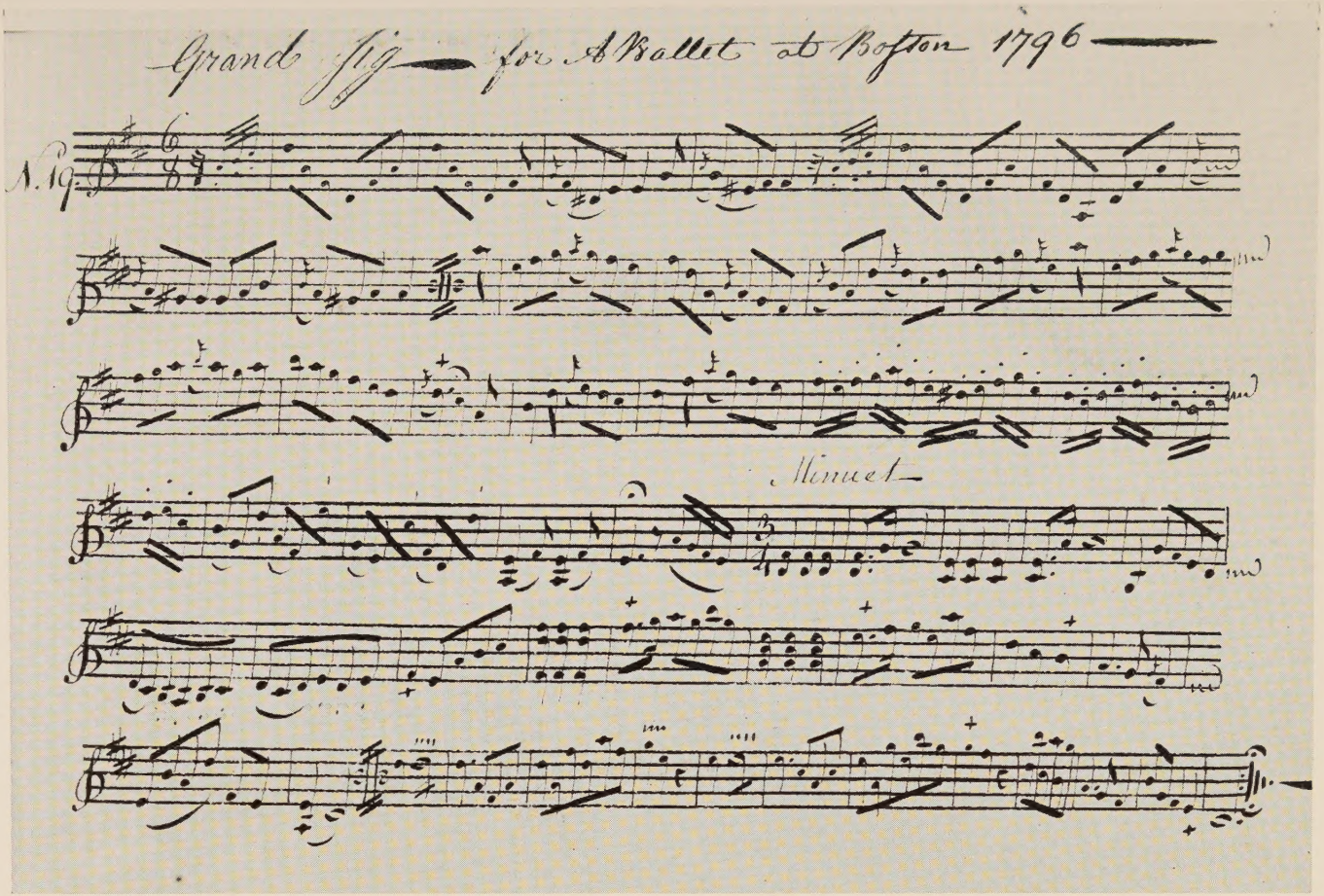
Because this study is based almost entirely on original letters, documents, newspapers and similar materials, which are difficult of access, it would have been impossible to prepare it without the generous cooperation of librarians all over the United States and Europe, the descendants of Pierre Landrin Duport and Louis Douvillier, and the many friends who have let me use their private collections or given me the benefit of their knowledge in special fields.

This monograph is in a sense a by-product of the research for a larger work, a history of theatrical dancing in America, for which I have been collecting materials for five years. I would never had had the courage to undertake this intensive research without the encouragement and assistance of the Rockefeller Foundation. I am deeply grateful, also, for the valuable help I have received from the following libraries and individuals: The New York Public Library, and especially the tireless staff of its unique Dance Collection: Miss Genevieve Oswald, Mr. Leroy Fentress, Miss Jacqueline Maskey and Miss Mary Terrana; Library of Congress; Alderman Library of the University of Virginia; Archives Nationales and the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; Boston Public Library; British Museum; Charleston Free Library; Charleston Library Society; Columbia Historical Society (Washington, D.C.); Columbia University Library; Enoch Pratt Free Library (Baltimore); Georgia Historical Society; Harvard College Library; John Hay Library of Brown University; Historical Society of Pennsylvania; National Library of Ireland; Louisiana Historical Society; Henry E. Huntington Library; Maryland Historical Society; New Orleans Public Library; New-York Historical Society; Washington, D.C. Public Library; Wisconsin State Historical Society; the Research Department of Colonial Williamsburg; the staff of Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Washington, D.C., and the Archives of St. Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, Louisiana; Mr. Ivor Guest, who read the manuscript and made many valuable suggestions; Mr. Cyril W. Beaumont; Mme. Sylvie Chevalley; Capt. Charles C. Copp, U.S.N. (Retired); Mr. Philip C. Copp; Mr. Frederick Freedman; Mr. Lincoln Kirstein; Mme. Vera Krassovskaya; Mr. Ernest C. Krohn; Mr. René Le Gardeur, Jr.; Ing. Herbert A. Mansfeld; Mr. Joseph E. Marks III; Mr. John Marshall; Mr. John Martin; Miss Kate Perry; Mr. George Raffalovich; Miss Mary Reardon; Dr. Kurt Stephenson; Mr. Walter Terry; Mrs. Edwin J. Tharp (Isobel French); Dr. Walter Toscanini; Dr. William Van Lennep; Mr. Helmut Weber-Andreae; Mrs. Robert H. Webb; Mr. Richard Wolfe; Miss Alice M. Wyss, and especially the patient editors of *Dance Perspectives,* Miss Selma Jeanne Cohen and Mr. A. J. Pischl.

I am responsible for all translations from foreign languages.

L. M.


French Contre-Dance — Call Convention
N. 15
Minour
Majeur
belong to the May at Boston 1794


Grand Jig — for A Ballet at Boston 1796
No. 19
Minuet

Mr. *DE DUPORT*,

DANCING-MASTER,

FROM PARIS,

HAS been induced, by the encouragement of ſeveral reſpectable perſons, in this town, to open a SCHOOL, for the purpoſe of inſtructing young Ladies and Gentlemen, in the *polite accompliſhment of* DANCING, and will be happy to receive their commands. He will *perfect*, in *three Months*, by *private tuition*, any grown perſons that may put themſelves under his care—for a ſpecimen of his abilities in teaching, he takes the liberty of mentioning HIS SON, who is allowed to be a wonderful proficient, by thoſe who have been witneſſes to his Dancing.

Mr. DUPORT, opens his School, to-morrow at Mrs. Riggely's in Gay-Street, which will be quite on a new plan, at *One Guinea* per Month, each and the ſame at Entrance. Any commands, addreſſed to him, will be thankfully received and duly attended to.

He hopes that a candid and judicious Public will not deem it preſumptuous in him to offer his Aſſiſtance, by exerting his Abilities to improve the Youth of this Country—He truſts that the Opportunities he has had of practiſing, under the particular Direction of the firſt Maſters, and his Experience in the Art of Teaching, will enable him to give Satisfaction to thoſe who will favour him with their commands.

Baltimore, April 12, 1791.

Plan of Mr. DE DUPORT'S *School, for Children and grown Perſons.*

I. MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, and FRIDAY, he will Teach ſix Children, from 8 o'Clock, in the Morning, until 10.
From 10 o'Cclock until 12, ſix grown Perſons.
From 12 o'Clock until 2, ſix Children.
From 5 o'Clock, until 8, in the Evening, ten grown Perſons.

II. TUESDAY, THURSDAY, and SATURDAY Mornings, will be allotted for Private Teaching; and from half paſt four o'Clock, until 8, in the Evening, twelve Children.
Cotillion Parties permitted after one month's inſtructions.